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FROM BEOWULF TO THOMAS HARDY

—
VOLUME TWO

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FROM BEOWULF TO THOMAS HARDY

TEXTS SELECTED AND EDITED
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IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME II.—FROM GOLDSMITH
TO THOMAS HARDY

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VOLUME TWO

FROM GOLDSMITH TO THOMAS HARDY

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728-1774)

Goldsmith's family was of English origin, but had long been settled in Ireland when he was born there on 10 November, 1728. Goldsmith's father was a clergyman and farmer, with a small income and a large family. Oliver has sketched his father's character in the narrative of the Man in Black in *The Citizen of the World*, and it is said that all members of the family were "equally generous, credulous, simple," and improvident. The greater part of Oliver's boyhood was passed in the village of Lissoy, where he was given some rather irregular instruction, and whence he proceeded in 1744 to Trinity College, Dublin. There he was entered as a poor scholar, or "sizar," a position humiliating to one of his sensitiveness of temper. He was also unfortunate in having a tutor who delighted in two subjects which Goldsmith detested—logic and mathematics—and who was apparently rather brutal besides. In addition, Goldsmith's awkwardness, ungainly appearance, and mental unreadiness—not to speak of his infractions of collegiate rules—all made against his academic success. He did, however, manage to obtain the degree of B.A. in 1749. His relatives wanted him to become a clergyman and he unwillingly undertook to prepare himself for ordination, but when he presented himself to Bishop Synge of Elphin he was rejected, because, according to tradition, he was wearing a pair of flaming scarlet breeches. A period of uncertain groping for a career followed, in which money was spent or lost which Goldsmith's relatives and now widowed mother could ill afford. Finally, early in 1753, Goldsmith reached Edinburgh to study medicine. There he attended some lectures, probably not working overmuch, and then went to Leyden to continue his studies. From Leyden he presently set out, "with one shirt in his pocket and a devout reliance on Providence," as Sir Walter Scott says, to travel through Europe on foot. By one means or another he succeeded in procuring subsistence as he walked through Flanders, France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, learning much which he afterwards put to literary use, and obtaining, it is said, a medical degree at either Louvain or Padua. Early in 1756 he was back again in England, living miserably in London, and trying with little or no success to earn a bare living by various occupations. By 1760 he had drifted into hack-writing for the booksellers, and this he continued until his death on 4 April, 1774. Goldsmith was the master of an easy, finished style—he touched no branch of literature that he did not adorn, wrote Doctor Johnson in the Latin epitaph inscribed on his monument in Westminster Abbey—and, despite his irregular habits, the booksellers found him a profitable servant. He compiled histories of Rome, Greece, and England, *A History of the Earth and Animated Nature*, and many another work which cannot here even be mentioned. Of the *Animated Nature* Dr. Johnson said: "He is now writing a Natural History, and will make it as interesting as a Persian tale." According to Lee Lewes, an actor, Goldsmith used to say that all of his compilations "his *Selections of English Poetry* showed more 'the art of profession.' Here he did nothing but mark the particular passages with a red lead pencil, and for this he got *two hundred pounds*—but then he used to add, 'a man shows his judgment in these selections, and he may be often twenty years of his life cultivating that judgment.'" It has been estimated that in the later years of his life Goldsmith's income from literary work may have been as high as £800 the year. He never learned, however, how to control his expenditures, and as his income rose so did his debts, with the result that he was never free from financial difficulties, and at the time of his death owed not less than £2000. "Was ever poet," asked Dr. Johnson, "so trusted before?"

Much of Goldsmith's writing was ephemeral and perished with his age, yet he contrived to give lasting interest to a surprising variety of work, and is still remembered as essayist (*The Citizen of the World*, 1760-1761), as poet (*The Traveler*, 1764; *The Deserted Village*, 1770; *Retaliation*, 1774), as novelist (*The Vicar of Wakefield*, 1766), and as playwright (*The Good-Natured Man*, 1768; *She Stoops to Conquer*, 1773). Probably he took greater care with his poems than with anything else, as we know that he wrote them very slowly and spent much time in revising them. *The Vicar of Wakefield*, on the other hand, he never revised, although it was not published until several years after it was written. It was, he explained, already paid for, so that there was no need to take further trouble with it. Yet, as Scott says, "we read *The Vicar of Wakefield* in youth and in age. We return to it again and again, and bless the memory of an author who contrives so well to reconcile us to human nature." Goldsmith's comedies show similar negligence and similar genius. *She Stoops to Conquer* was a protest against the sentimental comedy fashionable in the later eighteenth century. It was also the work of an amateur at play-making who wrote it for money. Yet it still lives because its author, despite all his follies, knew so well how "to reconcile us to human nature."

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

OR,

THE MISTAKES OF A NIGHT

A COMEDY

DEDICATION

To SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

DEAR SIR,

By inscribing this slight performance to you, I do not mean so much to compliment you as myself. It may do me some honor to inform the public that I have lived many years in intimacy with you. It may serve the interests of mankind also to inform them that the greatest wit may be found in a character without impairing the most unaffected piety.

I have, particularly, reason to thank you for your partiality to this performance. The undertaking a comedy not merely sentimental was very dangerous; and Mr. Colman, who saw this piece in its various stages, always thought it so.¹ However, I ventured to trust it to the public, and, though it was necessarily delayed till late in the season, I have every reason to be grateful.

I am, dear sir,

Your most sincere friend

And admirer,

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

PROLOGUE

BY DAVID GARRICK, ESQ.

Enter MR. WOODWARD,² dressed in black, and holding a handkerchief to his eyes

EXCUSE me, sirs, I pray—I can't yet speak—I'm crying now—and have been all the week! 'Tis not alone this mourning suit, good masters;

I've that within—for which there are no plasters!

¹The sentimental comedy in vogue at the time dealt only with people of rank and fashion, was affected in language, and aimed at commending virtue rather than ridiculing folly and vice. George Colman was the manager of Covent Garden Theater from 1767 to 1774. He was reluctant to produce Goldsmith's play, fearing it would fail. Dr. Johnson was instrumental in inducing him to try it. It was finally performed on 15 March, 1773, and there were eleven other performances

Pray would you know the reason why I'm crying?

The Comic muse, long sick, is now a-dying! And if she goes, my tears will never stop: For as a player, I can't squeeze out one drop: I am undone, that's all—shall lose my bread—

I'd rather, but that's nothing—lose my head.

When the sweet maid is laid upon the bier, Shuter and I shall be chief mourners here.

To her a mawkish drab of spurious breed, Who deals in sentimentals will succeed!

Poor Ned³ and I are dead to all intents,

We can as soon speak Greek as sentiments!

Both nervous grown, to keep our spirits up,

We now and then take down a hearty cup.

What shall we do, if Comedy forsake us?

They'll turn us out, and no one else will take us.

But why can't I be moral?—Let me try—

My heart thus pressing—fixed my face and eye—

With a sententious look, that nothing means

(Faces are blocks, in sentimental scenes),

Thus I begin: "All is not gold that glitters,

Pleasure seems sweet, but proves a glass of bitters.

When ign'rance enters, folly is at hand;

Learning is better far than house and land,

Let not your virtue trip; who trips may stumble,

And virtue is not virtue if she tumble."

I give it up—morals won't do for me;

To make you laugh I must play tragedy.

One hope remains—hearing the maid was ill,

A Doctor comes this night to show his skill.

To cheer her heart, and give your muscles motion,

He, in five draughts prepared, presents a potion:

A kind of magic charm—for be assured,

If you will swallow it, the maid is cured.

But desperate the Doctor and her case is,

If you reject the dose and make wry faces!

before the close of the Covent-Garden season on 31 May, the play proving immediately successful.

²Henry Woodward had acted the part of Lofty in Goldsmith's *Good-Natured Man* (1768), but had no part in this play. He refused the part of Tony Lumpkin.

³Edward Shuter, playing the part of Croaker, had had much to do with the success of the *Good-Natured Man*. In *She Stoops to Conquer* he acted the part of Hardcastle.

This truth he boasts, will boast it while he lives,
 No poisonous drugs are mixed in what he gives;
 Should he succeed, you'll give him his degree;
 If not, within he will receive no fee!
 The college you,¹ must his pretensions back,
 Pronounce him regular, or dub him quack.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

SIR CHARLES MAR-	MRS. HARDCASTLE
LOW	MISS HARDCASTLE
YOUNG MARLOW	MISS NEVILLE
(HIS SON)	MAID
HARDCASTLE	
HASTINGS	
TONY LUMPKIN	
DIGGORY	

Landlords, Servants etc., etc.

ACT I

SCENE I—*A Chamber in an old-fashioned House.*

Enter MRS. HARDCASTLE and MR. HARDCASTLE

Mrs. Hardcastle. I vow, Mr. Hardcastle, you're very particular. Is there a creature in the whole country, but ourselves, that does not take a trip to town now and then, to rub off the rust a little? There's the two Miss Hoggs, and our neighbor, Mrs. Grigsby, go to take a month's polishing every winter.

Hard. Ay, and bring back vanity and affectation to last them the whole year. I wonder why London cannot keep its own fools at home. In my time, the follies of the town crept slowly among us, but now they travel faster than a stage-coach. Its fopperies come down, not only as inside passengers, but in the very basket.²

Mrs. Hard. Ay, *your* times were fine times, indeed; you have been telling us of *them* for many a long year. Here we live in an old rumbling³ mansion that looks for all the world like an inn, but that we never

see company. Our best visitors are old Mrs. Oddfish, the curate's wife, and little Cripple-gate, the lame dancing-master; and all our entertainment your old stories of Prince Eugene⁴ and the Duke of Marlborough. I hate such old-fashioned trumpery.

Hard. And I love it. I love everything that's old: old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine; and, I believe, Dorothy [*Taking her hand*], you'll own I have been pretty fond of an old wife.

Mrs. Hard. Lord, Mr. Hardcastle, you're for ever at your Dorothys and your old wives. You may be a Darby, but I'll be no Joan,⁵ I promise you. I'm not so old as you'd make me, by more than one good year. Add twenty to twenty, and make money of that.

Hard. Let me see; twenty added to twenty makes just fifty and seven!

Mrs. Hard. It's false, Mr. Hardcastle: I was but twenty when I was brought to bed of Tony, that I had by Mr. Lumpkin, my first husband; and he's not come to years of discretion yet.

Hard. Nor ever will, I dare answer for him. Ay, you have taught *him* finely!

Mrs. Hard. No matter, Tony Lumpkin has a good fortune. My son is not to live by his learning. I don't think a boy wants much learning to spend fifteen hundred a year.

Hard. Learning, quotha! A mere composition of tricks and mischief!

Mrs. Hard. Humor, my dear—nothing but humor. Come, Mr. Hardcastle, you must allow the boy a little humor.

Hard. I'd sooner allow him a horse-pond! If burning the footmen's shoes, frightening the maids, and worrying the kittens be humor, he has it. It was but yesterday he fastened my wig to the back of my chair, and when I went to make a bow, I popped my bald head in Mrs. Frizzle's face!⁶

Mrs. Hard. And am I to blame? The poor boy was always too sickly to do any good. A school would be his death. When he comes to be a little stronger, who knows

¹*I. e.*, the audience, forming the College of Physicians, must pronounce the Doctor qualified to practise or not.

²A large wicker receptacle on the back axle-tree, used for carrying luggage and occasionally passengers.

³This probably should be "rambling."

⁴Prince Eugene of Savoy was the ally of Marlborough at Blenheim and later.

⁵Traditional types of a contented couple.

⁶A trick played on Goldsmith himself by Lord Clare's daughter.

what a year or two's Latin may do for him?

Hard. Latin for him! A cat and fiddle! No, no, the alehouse and the stable are the only schools he'll ever go to!

Mrs. Hard. Well, we must not snub the poor boy now, for I believe we shan't have him long among us. Anybody that looks in his face may see he's consumptive.

Hard. Ay, if growing too fat be one of the symptoms.

Mrs. Hard. He coughs sometimes.

Hard. Yes, when his liquor goes the wrong way.

Mrs. Hard. I'm actually afraid of his lungs.

Hard. And truly, so am I; for he sometimes whoops like a speaking-trumpet—*[Tony hallooing behind the scenes]*—Oh, there he goes!—A very consumptive figure, truly!

Enter TONY, crossing the stage

Mrs. Hard. Tony, where are you going, my charmer? Won't you give papa and I a little of your company, lovey?

Tony. I'm in haste, mother, I cannot stay.

Mrs. Hard. You shan't venture out this raw evening, my dear; you look most shockingly.

Tony. I can't stay, I tell you. The Three Pigeons¹ expects me down every moment. There's some fun going forward.

Hard. Ay, the alehouse, the old place: I thought so.

Mrs. Hard. A low, paltry set of fellows.

Tony. Not so low, neither. There's Dick Muggins the exciseman, Jack Slang the horse doctor, little Aminadab that grinds the music-box, and Tom Twist that spins the pewter platter.

Mrs. Hard. Pray, my dear, disappoint them for one night, at least.

Tony. As for disappointing *them*, I should not much mind; but I can't abide to disappoint *myself*.

Mrs. Hard. *[Detaining him]* You shan't go.

Tony. I will, I tell you.

Mrs. Hard. I say you shan't.

Tony. We'll see which is strongest, you or I. *Exit hauling her out.*

Hard. Ay, there goes a pair that only spoil each other. But is not the whole age in a combination to drive sense and discretion out of doors? There's my pretty darling Kate; the fashions of the times have almost infected her too. By living a year or two in town, she is as fond of gauze and French frippery as the best of them.

Enter MISS HARDCASTLE

Hard. Blessings on my pretty innocence! Dressed out as usual, my Kate! Goodness, what a quantity of superfluous silk hast thou got about thee, girl! I could never teach the fools of this age that the indigent world could be clothed out of the trimmings of the vain.

Miss Hard. You know our agreement, sir. You allow me the morning to receive and pay visits, and to dress in my own manner; and in the evening I put on my housewife's dress, to please you.

Hard. Well, remember, I insist on the terms of our agreement; and, by the by, I believe I shall have occasion to try your obedience this very evening.

Miss Hard. I protest, sir, I don't comprehend your meaning.

Hard. Then to be plain with you, Kate, I expect the young gentleman I have chosen to be your husband from town this very day. I have his father's letter, in which he informs me his son is set out, and that he intends to follow himself shortly after.

Miss Hard. Indeed! I wish I had known something of this before. Bless me, how shall I behave? It's a thousand to one I shan't like him; our meeting will be so formal, and so like a thing of business, that I shall find no room for friendship or esteem.

Hard. Depend upon it, child, I'll never control your choice; but Mr. Marlow, whom I have pitched upon, is the son of my old friend, Sir Charles Marlow, of whom you have heard me talk so often. The young gentleman has been bred a scholar, and is designed for an employment in the service of his country. I am told he's a man of an excellent understanding.

Miss Hard. Is he?

Hard. Very generous.

Miss Hard. I believe I shall like him.

Hard. Young and brave.

Miss Hard. I'm sure I shall like him.

¹Several eighteenth-century inns used this name.

Hard. And very handsome.

Miss Hard. My dear papa, say no more [*Kissing his hand*], he's mine, I'll have him!

Hard. And, to crown all, Kate, he's one of the most bashful and reserved young fellows in all the world.

Miss Hard. Eh! you have frozen me to death again. That word reserved has undone all the rest of his accomplishments. A reserved lover, it is said, always makes a suspicious husband.

Hard. On the contrary, modesty seldom resides in a breast that is not enriched with nobler virtues. It was the very feature in his character that first struck me.

Miss Hard. He must have more striking features to catch me, I promise you. However, if he be so young, so handsome, and so everything, as you mention, I believe he'll do still. I think I'll have him.

Hard. Ay, Kate, but there is still an obstacle. It is more than an even wager he may not have you.

Miss Hard. My dear papa, why will you mortify one so?—Well, if he refuses, instead of breaking my heart at his indifference, I'll only break my glass for its flattery, set my cap to some newer fashion, and look out for some less difficult admirer.

Hard. Bravely resolved! In the meantime I'll go prepare the servants for his reception; as we seldom see company, they want as much training as a company of recruits the first day's muster. *Exit.*

Miss Hard. Lud, this news of papa's puts me all in a flutter. Young, handsome; these he put last, but I put them foremost. Sensible, good-natured; I like all that. But then reserved, and sheepish, that's much against him. Yet can't he be cured of his timidity, by being taught to be proud of his wife? Yes, and can't I—— But I vow I'm disposing of the husband before I have secured the lover!

Enter MISS NEVILLE

Miss Hard. I'm glad you're come, Neville, my dear. Tell me, Constance, how do I look this evening? Is there anything whimsical about me? Is it one of my well-looking days, child? Am I in face to-day?

¹Make myself attractive in.

²Am I looking my best?

Miss Neville. Perfectly, my dear. Yet now I look again—bless me!—sure no accident has happened among the canary birds or the goldfishes? Has your brother or the cat been meddling? Or has the last novel been too moving?

Miss Hard. No; nothing of all this. I have been threatened—I can scarce get it out—I have been threatened with a lover!

Miss Neville. And his name——

Miss Hard. Is Marlow.

Miss Neville. Indeed!

Miss Hard. The son of Sir Charles Marlow.

Miss Neville. As I live, the most intimate friend of Mr. Hastings, my admirer. They are never asunder. I believe you must have seen him when we lived in town.

Miss Hard. Never.

Miss Neville. He's a very singular character, I assure you. Among women of reputation and virtue he is the modestest man alive, but his acquaintance give him a very different character among creatures of another stamp; you understand me?

Miss Hard. An odd character, indeed! I shall never be able to manage him. What shall I do? Pshaw, think no more of him, but trust to occurrences for success. But how goes on your own affair, my dear? Has my mother been courting you for my brother Tony, as usual?

Miss Neville. I have just come from one of our agreeable tête-à-têtes. She has been saying a hundred tender things, and setting off her pretty monster as the very pink of perfection.

Miss Hard. And her partiality is such that she actually thinks him so. A fortune like yours is no small temptation. Besides, as she has the sole management of it, I'm not surprised to see her unwilling to let it go out of the family.

Miss Neville. A fortune like mine, which chiefly consists in jewels, is no such mighty temptation. But, at any rate, if my dear Hastings be but constant, I make no doubt to be too hard for her at last. However, I let her suppose that I am in love with her son, and she never once dreams that my affections are fixed upon another.

Miss Hard. My good brother holds out stoutly. I could almost love him for hating you so.

Miss Neville. It is a good-natured creature at bottom, and I'm sure would wish to see me married to anybody but himself. But my aunt's bell rings for our afternoon's walk round the improvements, *Allons!*¹ Courage is necessary, as our affairs are critical.

Miss Hard. Would it were bed-time and all were well.² *Exeunt.*

SCENE II—*An Alehouse Room. Several shabby fellows with punch and tobacco. TONY at the head of the table, a little higher than the rest, a mallet in his hand.*

Omnes. Hurree, hurree, hurree, bravo!

First Fellow. Now, gentlemen, silence for a song. The 'squire is going to knock himself down for a song.³

Omnes. Ay, a song, a song.

Tony. Then I'll sing you, gentlemen, a song I made upon this alehouse, the Three Pigeons.

SONG

Let schoolmasters puzzle their brain

With grammar, and nonsense, and learning;

Good liquor, I stoutly maintain,

Gives genus⁴ a better discerning.

Let them brag of their Heathenish Gods,

Their Lethes, their Styxes, and Stygians,

Their Quis, and their Quæs, and their Quods,

They're all but a parcel of pigeons.⁵

Toroddle, toroddle, toroll!

When Methodist preachers come down,

A-preaching that drinking is sinful,

I'll wager the rascals a crown,

They always preach best with a skinful.

But when you come down with your pence,

For a slice of their scurvy religion,

I'll leave it to all men of sense,

But you my good friend, are the pigeon.

Toroddle, toroddle, toroll!

Then come, put the jorum⁶ about,

And let us be merry and clever,

Our hearts and our liquors are stout,

Here's the Three Jolly Pigeons for ever.

Let some cry up woodcock or hare,

Your bustards, your ducks, and your widgeons;

But of all the birds in the air,

Here's a health to the Three Jolly Pigeons.

Toroddle, toroddle, toroll!

Omnes. Bravo, bravo!

First Fellow. The 'squire has got spunk in him.

Second Fellow. I loves to hear him sing, bekeays he never gives us nothing that's low.⁷

Third Fellow. O damn anything that's low! I cannot bear it

Fourth Fellow. The genteel thing is the genteel thing at any time, if so be that a gentleman bees in a concatenation accordingly.

Third Fellow. I like the maxum of it, Master Muggins. What though I am obligated to dance a bear?—a man may be a gentleman for all that. May this be my poison if my bear ever dances but to the very genteelst of tunes—*Water Parted*,⁸ or the minuet in *Ariadne*.⁹

Second Fellow. What a pity it is the 'squire is not come to his own. It would be well for all the publicans within ten miles round of him.

Tony. Ecod,¹⁰ and so it would, Master Slang. I'd then show what it was to keep choice of company.

Second Fellow. Oh, he takes after his own father for that. To be sure, old 'Squire

⁶Large drinking-bowl.

⁷This and following speeches carry on Goldsmith's attack on sentimental comedy. In *The Present State of Polite Learning* he had written: "By the power of one single monosyllable our critics have almost got the victory over humor amongst us. Does the poet paint the absurdities of the vulgar; then he is *low*; does he exaggerate the features of folly, to render it more thoroughly ridiculous, he is then very *low*. In short, they have proscribed the comic or satirical muse from every walk but high life, which, though abounding in fools as well as the humblest station, is by no means so fruitful in absurdity. Among well-bred fools we may despise much, but have little to laugh at."

⁸Song of Arbaces in Arne's *Artaxerxes*.

⁹Opera by Handel.

¹⁰Corruption of "By God."

¹Let us go.

²Quoted from Falstaff, 1 *Henry IV*, v, 1.

³Call upon himself for a song.

⁴*I. e.*, genius.

⁵*I. e.*, foolish persons. The word is used in the same sense in the following stanza.

Lumpkin was the finest gentleman I ever set my eyes on. For winding the straight horn, or beating a thicket for a hare, or a wench, he never had his fellow. It was a saying in the place that he kept the best horses, dogs, and girls in the whole county.

Tony. Ecod, and when I'm of age I'll be no bastard, I promise you. I have been thinking of Bet Bouncer and the miller's gray mare to begin with. But come, my boys, drink about and be merry, for you pay no reckoning. Well, Stingo,¹ what's the matter?

Enter LANDLORD

Landlord. There be two gentlemen in a post-chaise at the door. They have lost their way upo' the forest, and they are talking something about Mr. Hardcastle.

Tony. As sure as can be, one of them must be the gentleman that's coming down to court my sister. Do they seem to be Londoners?

Landlord. I believe they may. They look woundily² like Frenchmen.

Tony. Then desire them to step this way, and I'll set them right in a twinkling. [*Exit Landlord*] Gentlemen, as they mayn't be good enough company for you, step down for a moment, and I'll be with you in the squeezing of a lemon. *Exeunt MOB.*

Tony. Father-in-law³ has been calling me whelp and hound this half-year. Now, if I pleased, I could be so revenged upon the old grumbletonian. But then I'm afraid—afraid of what? I shall soon be worth fifteen hundred a year, and let him frighten me out of *that* if he can!

Enter LANDLORD, conducting MARLOW and HASTINGS

Marlow. What a tedious, uncomfortable day have we had of it! We were told it was but forty miles across the country, and we have come above threescore.

Hastings. And all, Marlow, from that unaccountable reserve of yours, that would not let us inquire more frequently on the way.

¹Nickname for a landlord. Strictly it means strong beer.

²*I. e.*, exceedingly.

³*I. e.*, stepfather.

Marlow. I own, Hastings, I am unwilling to lay myself under an obligation to every one I meet, and often stand the chance of an unmannerly answer.

Hastings. At present, however, we are not likely to receive any answer.

Tony. No offense, gentlemen. But I'm told you have been inquiring for one Mr. Hardcastle in these parts. Do you know what part of the country you are in?

Hastings. Not in the least, sir, but should thank you for information.

Tony. Nor the way you came?

Hastings. No, sir, but if you can inform us—

Tony. Why, gentlemen, if you know neither the road you are going, nor where you are, nor the road you came, the first thing I have to inform you is, that—you have lost your way.

Marlow. We wanted no ghost to tell us that.⁴

Tony. Pray, gentlemen, may I be so bold as to ask the place from whence you came?

Marlow. That's not necessary towards directing us where we are to go.

Tony. No offense; but question for question is all fair, you know. Pray, gentlemen, is not this same Hardcastle a cross-grained, old-fashioned, whimsical fellow with an ugly face, a daughter, and a pretty son?

Hastings. We have not seen the gentleman, but he has the family you mention.

Tony. The daughter, a tall, trapesing, trolloping, talkative maypole; the son, a pretty, well-bred, agreeable youth, that everybody is fond of?

Marlow. Our information differs in this. The daughter is said to be well-bred and beautiful; the son, an awkward booby, reared up and spoiled at his mother's apron-string.

Tony. He-he-hem—then, gentlemen, all I have to tell you is, that you won't reach Mr. Hardcastle's house this night, I believe.

Hastings. Unfortunate!

Tony. It's a damned long, dark, boggy, dirty, dangerous way. Stingo, tell the gentlemen the way to Mr. Hardcastle's [*Winking upon the Landlord*]*—*Mr. Hardcastle's of Quagmire Marsh; you understand me.

Landlord. Master Hardcastle's! Lack-a-

⁴From *Hamlet*, I, v.

daisy,¹ my masters, you're come a deadly deal wrong! When you came to the bottom of the hill, you should have crossed down Squash Lane.

Marlow. Cross down Squash Lane!

Landlord. Then you were to keep straight forward till you came to four roads.

Marlow. Come to where four roads meet?

Tony. Ay, but you must be sure to take only one of them.

Marlow. O sir, you're facetious.

Tony. Then, keeping to the right, you are to go sideways till you come upon Crackskull Common: there you must look sharp for the track of the wheel, and go forward till you come to farmer Murrain's barn. Coming to the farmer's barn, you are to turn to the right, and then to the left, and then to the right about again, till you find out the old mill—

Marlow. Zounds, man! we could as soon find out the longitude!²

Hastings. What's to be done, Marlow?

Marlow. This house promises but a poor reception, though perhaps the landlord can accommodate us.

Landlord. Alack, master, we have but one spare bed in the whole house.

Tony. And to my knowledge, that's taken up by three lodgers already. [*After a pause, in which the rest seem disconcerted*] I have hit it. Don't you think, Stingo, our landlady could accommodate the gentlemen by the fire-side, with—three chairs and a bolster?

Hastings. I hate sleeping by the fire-side.

Marlow. And I detest your three chairs and a bolster.

Tony. You do, do you?—then let me see—what if you go on a mile further to the Buck's Head—the old Buck's Head on the hill, one of the best inns in the whole county?

Hastings. Oh, oh! so we have escaped an adventure for this night, however.

Landlord. [*Apart to Tony*] Sure, you ben't sending them to your father's as an inn, be you?³

¹Corruption of "Alack-a-day," indicating surprise.

²A popular inquiry in the eighteenth century, owing to the large reward offered by Parliament in 1714 for discovery of a means of accurately ascertaining the longitude at sea. The reward was gained by John Harrison in 1773.

³A similar trick had been played on Goldsmith himself, at Ardagh, in his youth.

Tony. Mum, you fool, you. Let *them* find that out. [*To them*] You have only to keep on straight forward, till you come to a large old house by the roadside. You'll see a pair of large horns over the door. That's the sign. Drive up the yard, and call stoutly about you.

Hastings. Sir, we are obliged to you. The servants can't miss the way?

Tony. No, no. But I tell you though, the landlord is rich, and going to leave off business; so he wants to be thought a gentleman, saving your presence, he! he! he! He'll be for giving you his company, and, ecod, if you mind him, he'll persuade you that his mother was an alderman, and his aunt a justice of the peace!

Landlord. A troublesome old blade, to be sure; but 'a⁴ keeps as good wines and beds as any in the whole country.

Marlow. Well, if he supplies us with these, we shall want no further connection. We are to turn to the right, did you say?

Tony. No, no; straight forward. I'll just step myself, and show you a piece of the way. [*To the Landlord*] Mum!

Landlord. Ah, bless your heart for a sweet, pleasant—damned mischievous son of a whore.

Exeunt.

ACT II

SCENE I—*An old-fashioned House.*

Enter HARDCASTLE, followed by three or four awkward SERVANTS

Hard. Well, I hope you're perfect in the table exercise I have been teaching you these three days. You all know your posts and your places, and can show that you have been used to good company without ever stirring from home?

Omnes. Ay, ay.

Hard. When company comes, you are not to pop out and stare, and then run in again like frightened rabbits in a warren.

Omnes. No, no.

Hard. You, Diggory, whom I have taken from the barn, are to make a show at the side-table; and you, Roger, whom I have advanced from the plough, are to place yourself behind my chair. But you're not to stand so, with your hands in your pockets.

⁴He.

Take your hands from your pockets, Roger; and from your head, you blockhead, you. See how Diggory carries his hands. They're a little too stiff, indeed, but that's no great matter.

Diggory. Ay, mind how I hold them. I learned to hold my hands this way when I was upon drill for the militia. And so being upon drill—

Hard. You must not be so talkative, Diggory. You must be all attention to the guests. You must hear us talk, and not think of talking; you must see us drink and not think of drinking; you must see us eat and not think of eating.

Diggory. By the laws, your worship, that's perfectly impossible. Whenever Diggory sees yeating going forward, ecod, he's always wishing for a mouthful himself.

Hard. Blockhead! Is not a bellyful in the kitchen as good as a bellyful in the parlor? Stay your stomach with that reflection.

Diggory. Ecod, I thank your worship, I'll make a shift to stay my stomach with a slice of cold beef in the pantry.

Hard. Diggory, you are too talkative. Then, if I happen to say a good thing, or tell a good story at table, you must not all burst out a-laughing, as if you made part of the company.

Diggory. Then, ecod, your worship must not tell the story of Ould Grouse in the gun-room; I can't help laughing at that—he! he! he!—for the soul of me. We have laughed at that these twenty years—ha! ha! ha!

Hard. Ha! ha! ha! The story is a good one. Well, honest Diggory, you may laugh at that—but still remember to be attentive. Suppose one of the company should call for a glass of wine, how will you behave? A glass of wine, sir, if you please [*To Diggory*].—Eh, why don't you move?

Diggory. Ecod, your worship, I never have courage till I see the eatables and drinkables brought upo' the table, and then I'm as bauld as a lion.

Hard. What, will nobody move?

First Servant. I'm not toleave this place.

Second Servant. I'm sure it's no pleace of mine.

Third Servant. Nor mine for sartain.

Diggory. Wauns, and I'm sure it canna be mine.

Hard. You numskulls! and so while, like your betters, you are quarreling for places, the guests must be starved. O, you dunces! I find I must begin all over again.—But don't I hear a coach drive into the yard? To your posts, you blockheads! I'll go in the meantime and give my old friend's son a hearty reception at the gate.

Exit HARDCASTLE.

Diggory. By the elevens, my pleace is gone quite out of my head!

Roger. I know that my pleace is to be everywhere!

First Servant. Where the devil is mine?

Second Servant. My pleace is to be nowhere at all; and so I'ze go about my business! *Exeunt SERVANTS, running about as if frightened, different ways.*

Enter SERVANTS with candles, showing in MARLOW and HASTINGS

Servant. Welcome, gentlemen, very welcome. This way.

Hastings. After the disappointments of the day, welcome once more, Charles, to the comforts of a clean room and a good fire. Upon my word, a very well-looking house—antique but creditable.

Marlow. The usual fate of a large mansion. Having first ruined the master by good housekeeping, it at last comes to levy contributions as an inn.

Hastings. As you say, we passengers are to be taxed to pay all these fineries. I have often seen a good side-board, or a marble chimney-piece, though not actually put in the bill, inflame a reckoning confoundedly.

Marlow. Travelers, George, must pay in all places. The only difference is, that in good inns you pay dearly for luxuries, in bad inns you are fleeced and starved.

Hastings. You have lived pretty much among them. In truth, I have been often surprised that you who have seen so much of the world, with your natural good sense and your many opportunities, could never yet acquire a requisite share of assurance.

Marlow. The Englishman's malady. But tell me, George, where could I have learned that assurance you talk of? My life has been chiefly spent in a college, or an inn, in seclusion from that lovely part of the creation that chiefly teach men confidence. I don't know that I was ever familiarly acquainted

with a single modest woman—except my mother.—But among females of another class, you know——

Hastings. Ay, among them you are impudent enough, of all conscience!

Marlow. They are of *us*, you know.

Hastings. But in the company of women of reputation I never saw such an idiot, such a trembler. You look for all the world as if you wanted an opportunity of stealing out of the room.

Marlow. Why, man, that's because I *do* want to steal out of the room. Faith, I have often formed a resolution to break the ice and rattle away at any rate. But I don't know how, a single glance from a pair of fine eyes has totally upset my resolution. An impudent fellow may counterfeit modesty, but I'll be hanged if a modest man can ever counterfeit impudence.

Hastings. If you could but say half the fine things to them that I have heard you lavish upon the barmaid of an inn, or even a college bed-maker——

Marlow. Why, George, I can't say fine things to them. They freeze, they petrify me. They may talk of a comet, or a burning mountain, or some such bagatelle. But to me, a modest woman, dressed out in all her finery, is the most tremendous object of the whole creation.

Hastings. Ha! ha! ha! At this rate, man, how can you ever expect to marry?

Marlow. Never, unless, as among kings and princes, my bride were to be courted by proxy. If, indeed, like an Eastern bridegroom, one were to be introduced to a wife he never saw before, it might be endured. But to go through all the terrors of a formal courtship, together with the episode of aunts, grandmothers, and cousins, and at last to blurt out the broad staring question of, "Madam, will you marry me?" No, no, that's a strain much above me, I assure you.

Hastings. I pity you. But how do you intend behaving to the lady you are come down to visit at the request of your father?

Marlow. As I behave to all other ladies. Bow very low, answer yes or no to all her demands.—But for the rest, I don't think I shall venture to look in her face till I see my father's again.

Hastings. I'm surprised that one who is so warm a friend can be so cool a lover.

Marlow. To be explicit, my dear Hastings, my chief inducement down was to be instrumental in forwarding your happiness, not my own. Miss Neville loves you; the family don't know you; as my friend you are sure of a reception, and let honor do the rest.

Hastings. My dear Marlow! But I'll suppress the emotion. Were I a wretch, meanly seeking to carry off a fortune, you should be the last man in the world I would apply to for assistance. But Miss Neville's person is all I ask, and that is mine, both from her deceased father's consent and her own inclination.

Marlow. Happy man! You have talents and art to captivate any woman. I'm doomed to adore the sex, and yet to converse with the only part of it I despise. This stammer in my address, and this awkward prepossessing visage of mine, can never permit me to soar above the reach of a milliner's apprentice, or one of the duchesses¹ of Drury Lane.—Pshaw! this fellow here to interrupt us.

Enter **HARDCASTLE**

Hard. Gentlemen, once more you are heartily welcome. Which is Mr. Marlow? Sir, you're heartily welcome. It's not my way, you see, to receive my friends with my back to the fire: I like to give them a hearty reception in the old style at my gate. I like to see their horses and trunks taken care of.

Marlow. [*Aside*] He has got our names from the servants already. [*To him*] We approve your caution and hospitality, sir. [*To Hastings*] I have been thinking, George, of changing our traveling dresses in the morning. I am grown confoundedly ashamed of mine.

Hard. I beg, Mr. Marlow, you'll use no ceremony in this house.

Hastings. I fancy, Charles, you're right; the first blow is half the battle. I intend opening the campaign with the white and gold.

Hard. Mr. Marlow—Mr. Hastings—gentlemen—pray be under no constraint in this house. This is Liberty Hall, gentlemen. You may do just as you please here.

Marlow. Yet, George, if we open the

¹Courtesans.

campaign too fiercely at first, we may want ammunition before it is over. I think to reserve the embroidery to secure a retreat.

Hard. Your talking of a retreat, Mr. Marlow, puts me in mind of the Duke of Marlborough, when we went to besiege Denain.¹ He first summoned the garrison—

Marlow. Don't you think the *ventre d'or*² waistcoat will do with the plain brown?

Hard. He first summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men—

Hastings. I think not; brown and yellow mix but very poorly.

Hard. I say, gentlemen, as I was telling you, he summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men—

Marlow. The girls like finery.

Hard. Which might consist of about five thousand men, well appointed with stores, ammunition, and other implements of war. "Now," says the Duke of Marlborough to George Brooks, that stood next to him—you must have heard of George Brooks—"I'll pawn my dukedom," says he, "but I take that garrison without spilling a drop of blood!" So—

Marlow. What, my good friend, if you gave us a glass of punch in the meantime? It would help us to carry on the siege with vigor.

Hard. Punch, sir! [*Aside*] This is the most unaccountable kind of modesty I ever met with!

Marlow. Yes, sir, punch! A glass of warm punch, after our journey, will be comfortable. This is Liberty Hall, you know.

Hard. Here's cup,³ sir.

Marlow. [*Aside*] So this fellow, in his Liberty Hall, will only let us have just what he pleases.

Hard. [*Taking the cup*] I hope you'll find it to your mind. I have prepared it with my own hands, and I believe you'll own the ingredients are tolerable. Will you be so good as to pledge me, sir? Here, Mr. Marlow, here is our better acquaintance! [*Drinks*]

Marlow. [*Aside*] A very impudent fellow

this! but he's a character, and I'll humor him a little. Sir, my service to you. [*Drinks*]

Hastings. [*Aside*] I see this fellow wants to give us his company, and forgets that he's an innkeeper before he has learned to be a gentleman.

Marlow. From the excellence of your cup, my old friend, I suppose you have a good deal of business in this part of the country. Warm work, now and then, at elections, I suppose?

Hard. No, sir, I have long given that work over. Since our betters have hit upon the expedient of electing each other, there's no business "for us that sell ale."

Hastings. So, then you have no turn for politics, I find.

Hard. Not in the least. There was a time, indeed, I fretted myself about the mistakes of government, like other people; but finding myself every day grow more angry, and the government growing no better, I left it to mend itself. Since that, I no more trouble my head about Heyder Ally,⁴ or Ally Cawn,⁵ than about *Ally Croker*.⁶ Sir, my service to you.

Hastings. So that, with eating above stairs and drinking below, with receiving your friends within and amusing them without, you lead a good, pleasant, bustling life of it.

Hard. I do stir about a great deal, that's certain. Half the differences of the parish are adjusted in this very parlor.

Marlow. [*After drinking*] And you have an argument in your cup, old gentleman, better than any in Westminster Hall.⁷

Hard. Ay, young gentleman, that, and a little philosophy.

Marlow. [*Aside*] Well, this is the first time I ever heard of an innkeeper's philosophy.

Hastings. So then, like an experienced general, you attack them on every quarter. If you find their reason manageable, you attack it with your philosophy; if you find they have no reason, you attack them with this. Here's your health, my philosopher.

[*Drinks*]

¹Town in northeastern France, where the French under Villars defeated the Allies in 1712.

²Gold-colored.

³Wine sweetened and flavored with various ingredients.

⁴Sultan of Mysore in the time of Clive and Warren Hastings.

⁵Subah of Bengal.

⁶Popular Irish song.

⁷Where the Law Courts met.

Hard. Good, very good, thank you; ha! ha! Your generalship puts me in mind of Prince Eugene, when he fought the Turks at the battle of Belgrade.¹ You shall hear.

Marlow. Instead of the battle of Belgrade, I believe it's almost time to talk about supper. What has your philosophy got in the house for supper?

Hard. For supper, sir! [*Aside*] Was ever such a request to a man in his own house!

Marlow. Yes, sir, supper, sir; I begin to feel an appetite. I shall make devilish work to-night in the larder, I promise you.

Hard. [*Aside*] Such a brazen dog sure never my eyes beheld. [*To him*] Why, really, sir, as for supper I can't well tell. My Dorothy and the cook maid settle these things between them. I leave these kind of things entirely to them.

Marlow. You do, do you?

Hard. Entirely. By the by, I believe they are in actual consultation upon what's for supper this moment in the kitchen.

Marlow. Then I beg they'll admit *me* as one of their privy council. It's a way I have got. When I travel, I always choose to regulate my own supper. Let the cook be called. No offense, I hope, sir.

Hard. O no, sir, none in the least; yet I don't know how: our Bridget, the cook maid, is not very communicative upon these occasions. Should we send for her, she might scold us all out of the house.

Hastings. Let's see your list of the larder then. I ask it as a favor. I always match my appetite to my bill of fare.

Marlow. [*To Hardcastle, who looks at them with surprise*] Sir, he's very right, and it's my way too.

Hard. Sir, you have a right to command here. Here, Roger, bring us the bill of fare for to-night's supper. I believe it's drawn out. Your manner, Mr. Hastings, puts me in mind of my uncle, Colonel Wallop. It was a saying of his, that no man was sure of his supper till he had eaten it.

Hastings. [*Aside*] All upon the high ropes! His uncle a colonel! We shall soon hear of his mother being a justice of peace. But let's hear the bill of fare.

Marlow. [*Perusing*] What's here? For

the first course; for the second course; for the desert. The devil, sir, do you think we have brought down the whole Joiners' Company, or the Corporation of Bedford, to eat up such a supper? Two or three little things, clean and comfortable, will do.

Hastings. But let's hear it.

Marlow. [*Reading*] For the first course at the top, a pig and prune sauce.

Hastings. Damn your pig, I say.

Marlow. And damn your prune sauce, say I.

Hard. And yet, gentlemen, to men that are hungry, pig with prune sauce is very good eating.

Marlow. At the bottom, a calf's tongue and brains.

Hastings. Let your brains be knocked out, my good sir; I don't like them.

Marlow. Or you may clap them on a plate by themselves, I do.

Hard. [*Aside*] Their impudence confounds me. [*To them*] Gentlemen, you are my guests, make what alterations you please. Is there anything else you wish to retrench or alter, gentlemen?

Marlow. Item: a pork pie, a boiled rabbit and sausages, a florentine,² a shaking pudding,³ and a dish of tiff—taff—taffety cream!⁴

Hastings. Confound your made dishes, I shall be as much at a loss in this house as at a green and yellow dinner at the French ambassador's table. I'm for plain eating.

Hard. I'm sorry, gentlemen, that I have nothing you like, but if there be anything you have a particular fancy to—

Marlow. Why, really, sir, your bill of fare is so exquisite, that any one part of it is full as good as another. Send us what you please. So much for supper. And now to see that our beds are aired, and properly taken care of.

Hard. I entreat you'll leave all that to me. You shall not stir a step.

Marlow. Leave that to you! I protest, sir, you must excuse me, I always look to these things myself.

² Baked pudding of minced meats, currants, spices, etc.

³ A jelly.

⁴ Marlow stutters. The dish was named from its appearance, resembling the silk known as taffeta.

¹In 1717.

Hard. I must insist, sir, you'll make yourself easy on that head.

Marlow. You see I'm resolved on it. [*Aside*] A very troublesome fellow this, as ever I met with.

Hard. Well, sir, I'm resolved at least to attend you. [*Aside*] This may be modern modesty, but I never saw anything look so like old-fashioned impudence.

Exeunt MARLOW and HARDCASTLE.

Hastings. So I find this fellow's civilities begin to grow troublesome. But who can be angry at those assiduities which are meant to please him? Ha! what do I see? Miss Neville, by all that's happy!

Enter MISS NEVILLE

Miss Neville. My dear Hastings! To what unexpected good fortune, to what accident, am I to ascribe this happy meeting?

Hastings. Rather let me ask the same question, as I could never have hoped to meet my dearest Constance at an inn.

Miss Neville. An inn! sure you mistake! my aunt, my guardian, lives here. What could induce you to think this house an inn?

Hastings. My friend, Mr. Marlow, with whom I came down, and I have been sent here as to an inn, I assure you. A young fellow whom we accidentally met at a house hard by directed us hither.

Miss Neville. Certainly it must be one of my hopeful cousin's tricks, of whom you have heard me talk so often, ha! ha! ha! ha!

Hastings. He whom your aunt intends for you? He of whom I have such just apprehensions?

Miss Neville. You have nothing to fear from him, I assure you. You'd adore him if you knew how heartily he despises me. My aunt knows it too, and has undertaken to court me for him, and actually begins to think she has made a conquest.

Hastings. Thou dear dissembler! You must know, my Constance, I have just seized this happy opportunity of my friend's visit here to get admittance into the family. The horses that carried us down are now fatigued with their journey, but they'll soon be refreshed; and then if my dearest girl will trust in her faithful Hastings, we shall soon be landed in France, where even among slaves the laws of marriage are respected.

Miss Neville. I have often told you that

though ready to obey you, I yet should leave my little fortune behind with reluctance. The greatest part of it was left me by my uncle, the India director, and chiefly consists in jewels. I have been for some time persuading my aunt to let me wear them. I fancy I'm very near succeeding. The instant they are put into my possession you shall find me ready to make them and myself yours.

Hastings. Perish the baubles! Your person is all I desire. In the meantime, my friend Marlow must not be let into his mistake. I know the strange reserve of his temper is such, that if abruptly informed of it, he would instantly quit the house before our plan was ripe for execution.

Miss Neville. But how shall we keep him in the deception? Miss Hardcastle is just returned from walking; what if we still continue to deceive him?—This, this way—
[*They confer*]

Enter MARLOW

Marlow. The assiduities of these good people tease me beyond bearing. My host seems to think it ill manners to leave me alone, and so he claps not only himself but his old-fashioned wife on my back. They talk of coming to sup with us, too; and then, I suppose, we are to run the gauntlet through all the rest of the family.—What have we got here?

Hastings. My dear Charles! Let me congratulate you!—The most fortunate accident!—Who do you think is just alighted?

Marlow. Cannot guess.

Hastings. Our mistresses, boy, Miss Hardcastle and Miss Neville. Give me leave to introduce Miss Constance Neville to your acquaintance. Happening to dine in the neighborhood, they called on their return to take fresh horses here. Miss Hardcastle has just stepped into the next room, and will be back in an instant. Wasn't it lucky? eh!

Marlow. [*Aside*] I have just been mortified enough of all conscience, and here comes something to complete my embarrassment.

Hastings. Well! but wasn't it the most fortunate thing in the world?

Marlow. Oh, yes! Very fortunate—a most joyful encounter.— But our dresses,

George, you know, are in disorder—what if we should postpone the happiness till to-morrow—to-morrow at her own house?—It will be every bit as convenient—and rather more respectful.—To-morrow let it be. *[Offering to go]*

Miss Neville. By no means, sir. Your ceremony will displease her. The disorder of your dress will show the ardor of your impatience. Besides, she knows you are in the house, and will permit you to see her.

Marlow. Oh, the devil! how shall I support it? Hem! hem! Hastings, you must not go. You are to assist me, you know. I shall be confoundedly ridiculous. Yet, hang it! I'll take courage. Hem!

Hastings. Pshaw, man! it's but the first plunge, and all's over. She's but a woman, you know.

Marlow. And of all women, she that I dread most to encounter!

Enter MISS HARDCASTLE, as returned from walking, a bonnet, etc.

Hastings. [Introducing them] Miss Hardcastle, Mr. Marlow, I'm proud of bringing two persons of such merit together, that only want to know, to esteem each other.

Miss Hard. [Aside] Now, for meeting my modest gentleman with a demure face, and quite in his own manner. *[After a pause, in which he appears very uneasy and disconcerted]* I'm glad of your safe arrival, sir. I'm told you had some accidents by the way.

Marlow. Only a few, madam. Yes, we had some. Yes, madam, a good many accidents, but should be sorry—madam—or rather glad of any accidents—that are so agreeably concluded. Hem!

Hastings. [To him] You never spoke better in your whole life. Keep it up, and I'll insure you the victory.

Miss Hard. I'm afraid you flatter, sir. You that have seen so much of the finest company can find little entertainment in an obscure corner of the country.

Marlow. [Gathering courage] I have lived, indeed, in the world, madam; but have kept very little company. I have been but an observer upon life, madam, while others were enjoying it.

Miss Neville. But that, I am told, is the way to enjoy it at last.

Hastings. [To him] Cicero never spoke better. Once more, and you are confirmed in assurance for ever.

Marlow. [To him] Hem! Stand by me, then, and when I'm down, throw in a word or two to set me up again.

Miss Hard. An observer, like you, upon life, were, I fear, disagreeably employed, since you must have had much more to censure than to approve.

Marlow. Pardon me, madam. I was always willing to be amused. The folly of most people is rather an object of mirth than uneasiness.

Hastings. [To him] Bravo, bravo. Never spoke so well in your whole life. Well, Miss Hardcastle, I see that you and Mr. Marlow are going to be very good company. I believe our being here will but embarrass the interview.

Marlow. Not in the least, Mr. Hastings. We like your company of all things. *[To him]* Zounds! George, sure you won't go? How can you leave us?

Hastings. Our presence will but spoil conversation, so we'll retire to the next room. *[To him]* You don't consider, man, that we are to manage a little tête-à-tête of our own.

Exeunt.

Miss Hard. [After a pause] But you have not been wholly an observer, I presume, sir. The ladies, I should hope, have employed some part of your addresses.

Marlow. [Relapsing into timidity] Pardon me, madam, I—I—I—as yet have studied—only—to—deserve them.

Miss Hard. And that some say is the very worst way to obtain them.

Marlow. Perhaps so, madam. But I love to converse only with the more grave and sensible part of the sex.—But I'm afraid I grow tiresome.

Miss Hard. Not at all, sir; there is nothing I like so much as grave conversation myself: I could hear it for ever. Indeed, I have often been surprised how a man of *sensibility* could ever admire those light airy pleasures, where nothing reaches the heart.

Marlow. It's—a disease—of the mind, madam. In the variety of tastes there must be some who, wanting a relish for—um-a-um.

Miss Hard. I understand you, sir. There must be some, who, wanting a relish for re-

finest pleasures, pretend to despise what they are incapable of tasting.

Marlow. My meaning, madam, but infinitely better expressed. And I can't help observing—a—

**Miss Hard.* [*Aside*] Who could ever suppose this fellow impudent upon some occasions? [*To him*] You were going to observe, sir—

Marlow. I was observing, madam—I protest, madam, I forget what I was going to observe.

Miss Hard. [*Aside*] I vow and so do I. [*To him*] You were observing, sir, that in this age of hypocrisy—something about hypocrisy, sir.

Marlow. Yes, madam. In this age of hypocrisy, there are few who upon strict enquiry do not—a—a—a—

Miss Hard. I understand you perfectly, sir.

Marlow. [*Aside*] Egad! and that's more than I do myself!

Miss Hard. You mean that in this hypocritical age there are few that do not condemn in public what they practise in private, and think they pay every debt to virtue when they praise it.

Marlow. True, madam; those who have most virtue in their mouths have least of it in their bosoms. But I'm sure I tire you, madam.

Miss Hard. Not in the least, sir; there's something so agreeable and spirited in your manner, such life and force—pray, sir, go on.

Marlow. Yes, madam. I was saying—that there are some occasions—when a total want of courage, madam, destroys all the—and puts us—upon a—a—a—

Miss Hard. I agree with you entirely, a want of courage upon some occasions assumes the appearance of ignorance, and betrays us when we most want to excel. I beg you'll proceed.

Marlow. Yes, madam. Morally speaking, madam—but I see Miss Neville expecting us in the next room. I would not intrude for the world.

Miss Hard. I protest, sir, I never was more agreeably entertained in all my life. Pray go on.

Marlow. Yes, madam. I was—but

she beckons us to join her. Madam, shall I do myself the honor to attend you?

Miss Hard. Well then, I'll follow.

Marlow. [*Aside*] This pretty smooth dialogue has done for me. *Exit.*

Miss Hard. Ha! ha! ha! Was there ever such a sober sentimental interview? I'm certain he scarce looked in my face the whole time. Yet the fellow, but for his unaccountable bashfulness, is pretty well, too. He has good sense, but then so buried in his fears that it fatigues one more than ignorance. If I could teach him a little confidence it would be doing somebody that I know of a piece of service. But who is that somebody?—that, faith, is a question I can scarce answer *Exit.*

Enter TONY and MISS NEVILLE, followed by MRS. HARDCASTLE and HASTINGS

Tony. What do you follow me for, cousin Con? I wonder you're not ashamed to be so very engaging.

Miss Neville. I hope, cousin, one may speak to one's own relations and not be to blame.

Tony. Ay, but I know what sort of a relation you want to make me, though; but it won't do. I tell you, cousin Con, it won't do; so I beg you'll keep your distance—I want no nearer relationship. [*She follows coquetting him to the back scene*]

Mrs. Hard. Well! I vow, Mr. Hastings, you are very entertaining. There's nothing in the world I love to talk of so much as London, and the fashions, though I was never there myself.

Hastings. Never there! You amaze me! From your air and manner, I concluded you had been bred all your life either at Ranelagh, St. James's, or Tower Wharf.¹

Mrs. Hard. Oh, sir, you're only pleased to say so. We country persons can have no manner at all. I'm in love with the town, and that serves to raise me above some of our neighboring rustics; but who can have a manner, that has never seen the Pantheon, the Grotto Gardens, the Borough, and such places where the nobility chiefly resort?

¹The two former were fashionable places, the latter decidedly the reverse. Hastings is taking humorous advantage of Mrs. Hardcastle's ignorance, which she herself exhibits in the following speech in coupling fashionable with unfashionable places of resort.

All I can do is to enjoy London at second-hand. I take care to know every *tête-à-tête* from the Scandalous Magazine,¹ and have all the fashions as they come out, in a letter from the two Miss Rickets of Crooked Lane. Pray how do you like this head,² Mr. Hastings?

Hastings. Extremely elegant and *degagée*,³ upon my word, madam. Your *friseur*⁴ is a Frenchman, I suppose?

Mrs. Hard. I protest, I dressed it myself from a print in the Ladies' Memorandum-book for the last year.

Hastings. Indeed. Such a head in a side-box at the Playhouse would draw as many gazers as my Lady Mayoress at a City Ball.

Mrs. Hard. I vow, since inoculation⁵ began, there is no such thing to be seen as a plain woman; so one must dress a little particular or one may escape in the crowd.

Hastings. But that can never be your case, madam, in any dress. [*Bowing*]

Mrs. Hard. Yet what signifies my dressing when I have such a piece of antiquity by my side as Mr. Hardcastle? All I can say will never argue down a single button from his clothes. I have often wanted him to throw off his great flaxen wig, and where he was bald, to plaster it over like my Lord Pately, with powder.

Hastings. You are right, madam; for as among the ladies there are none ugly, so among the men there are none old.

Mrs. Hard. But what do you think his answer was? Why, with his usual Gothic⁶ vivacity, he said I only wanted him to throw off his wig to convert it into a *tête*⁷ for my own wearing!

Hastings. Intolerable! At your age you may wear what you please, and it must become you.

¹Its real name was the *Town and Country Magazine*. It published a series of portraits called *Tête-à-Têtes*, with satirical biographies.

²This manner of dressing the hair.

³At ease.

⁴Hairdresser.

⁵It became known in England some fifty years before the first performance of this play, but its introduction was gradual.

⁶Barbarous.

⁷False hair.

Mrs. Hard. Pray, Mr. Hastings, what do you take to be the most fashionable age about town?

Hastings. Some time ago forty was all the mode; but I'm told the ladies intend to bring up fifty for the ensuing winter.

Mrs. Hard. Seriously? Then I shall be too young for the fashion.

Hastings. No lady begins now to put on jewels till she's past forty. For instance, Miss there, in a polite circle, would be considered as a child—as a mere maker of samplers.

Mrs. Hard. And yet Mrs. Niece thinks herself as much a woman and is as fond of jewels as the oldest of us all.

Hastings. Your niece, is she? And that young gentleman, a brother of yours, I should presume?

Mrs. Hard. My son, sir. They are contracted to each other. Observe their little sports. They fall in and out ten times a day, as if they were man and wife already. [*To them*] Well, Tony, child, what soft things are you saying to your cousin Constance this evening?

Tony. I have been saying no soft things, but that it's very hard to be followed about so. Ecod! I've not a place in the house now that's left to myself but the stable.

Mrs. Hard. Never mind him, Con, my dear. He's in another story behind your back.

Miss Neville. There's something generous in my cousin's manner. He falls out before faces to be forgiven in private.

Tony. That's a damned confounded — crack.

Mrs. Hard. Ah! he's a sly one. Don't you think they're like each other about the mouth, Mr. Hastings? The Blenkinsop mouth to a T. They're of a size, too. Back to back, my pretties, that Mr. Hastings may see you. Come, Tony.

Tony. You had as good not make me, I tell you. [*Measuring*]

Miss Neville. O lud! he has almost cracked my head.

Mrs. Hard. Oh, the monster! For shame, Tony. You a man, and behave so!

Tony. If I'm a man, let me have my fortin. Ecod! I'll not be made a fool of no longer.

Mrs. Hard. Is this, ungrateful boy, all

that I'm to get for the pains I have taken in your education? I that have rocked you in your cradle, and fed that pretty mouth with a spoon! Did not I work that waistcoat to make you genteel? Did not I prescribe for you every day, and weep while the receipt was operating?

Tony. Ecod! you had reason to weep, for you have been dosing me ever since I was born. I have gone through every receipt in *The Complete Housewife* ten times over; and you have thoughts of coursing me through *Quincy*¹ next spring. But, ecod! I tell you, I'll not be made a fool of no longer.

Mrs. Hard. Wasn't it all for your good, viper? Wasn't it all for your good?

Tony. I wish you'd let me and my good alone, then. Snubbing this way when I'm in spirits! If I'm to have any good, let it come of itself; not to keep dinging it, dinging it into one so.

Mrs. Hard. That's false; I never see you when you're in spirits. No, Tony, you then go to the alehouse or kennel. I'm never to be delighted with your agreeable, wild notes, unfeeling monster!

Tony. Ecod! Mamma, your own notes are the wildest of the two.

Mrs. Hard. Was ever the like? But I see he wants to break my heart, I see he does.

Hastings. Dear madam, permit me to lecture the young gentleman a little. I'm certain I can persuade him to his duty.

Mrs. Hard. Well! I must retire. Come, Constance, my love. You see, Mr. Hastings, the wretchedness of my situation. Was ever poor woman so plagued with a dear, sweet, pretty, provoking, undutiful boy?

Exeunt MRS. HARDCASTLE and MISS NEVILLE

Tony. [*Singing*] "There was a young man riding by, and fain would have his will. Rang do dido dee." Don't mind her. Let her cry. It's the comfort of her heart. I have seen her and sister cry over a book for an hour together, and they said they liked the book the better the more it made them cry.

Hastings. Then you're no friend to the ladies, I find, my pretty young gentleman?

Tony. That's as I find 'um.

Hastings. Not to her of your mother's choosing, I dare answer! And yet she appears to me a pretty, well-tempered girl.

Tony. That's because you don't know her as well as I. Ecod! I know every inch about her, and there's not a more bitter cantankerous toad in all Christendom!

Hastings. [*Aside*] Pretty encouragement, this, for a lover.

Tony. I have seen her since the height of that. [*Extending his arm*] She has as many tricks as a hare in a thicket or a colt the first day's breaking.

Hastings. To me she appears sensible and silent!

Tony. Ay, before company. But when she's with her playmates she's as loud as a hog in a gate.²

Hastings. But there is a meek modesty about her that charms me.

Tony. Yes, but curb her never so little, she kicks up and you're flung in a ditch.

Hastings. Well, but you must allow her a little beauty.—Yes, you must allow her some beauty.

Tony. Bandbox! She's all a made-up thing, mun. Ah! could you but see Bet Bouncer of those parts, you might then talk of beauty. Ecod, she has two eyes as black as sloes, and cheeks as broad and red as a pulpit cushion. She'd make two of she.

Hastings. Well, what say you to a friend that would take this bitter bargain off your hand?

Tony. Anon.³

Hastings. Would you thank him that would take Miss Neville, and leave you to happiness and your dear Betsy?

Tony. Ay; but where is there such a friend, for who would take *her*?

Hastings. I am he. If you but assist me, I'll engage to whip her off to France, and you shall never hear more of her.

Tony. Assist you! Ecod, I will, to the last drop of my blood. I'll clap a pair of horses to your chaise that shall trundle you off in a twinkling, and maybe get you a part of her fortin besides, in jewels, that you little dream of.

¹*The Complete Housewife* was an eighteenth-century handbook of household medicine. John Quincy wrote a *Complete English Dispensatory* (1st ed'n, 1719; 14th ed'n, 1772).

²When wedged in, and unable to move.

³Probably signifies that Tony has not caught Hastings's meaning.

Hastings. My dear 'squire, this looks like a lad of spirit.

Tony. Come along then, and you shall see more of my spirit before you have done with me. [Singing]

We are the boys
That fears no noise
Where the thundering cannons roar.
Exeunt.

ACT III

SCENE I—*Same as in preceding Act.*

Enter **HARDCASTLE**

Hard. What could my old friend Sir Charles mean by recommending his son as the modestest young man in town? To me he appears the most impudent piece of brass that ever spoke with a tongue. He has taken possession of the easy chair by the fire-side already. He took off his boots in the parlor, and desired me to see them taken care of. I'm desirous to know how his impudence affects my daughter.—She will certainly be shocked at it.

Enter **MISS HARDCASTLE** *plainly dressed*

Hard. Well, my Kate, I see you have changed your dress as I bid you; and yet, I believe, there was no great occasion.

Miss Hard. I find such a pleasure, sir, in obeying your commands that I take care to observe them without ever debating their propriety.

Hard. And yet, Kate, I sometimes give you some cause, particularly when I recommended my *modest* gentleman to you as a lover to-day.

Miss Hard. You taught me to expect something extraordinary, and I find the original exceeds the description!

Hard. I was never so surprised in my life! He has quite confounded all my faculties!

Miss Hard. I never saw anything like it—and a man of the world, too!

Hard. Ay, he learned it all abroad. What a fool was I, to think a young man could learn modesty by traveling. He might as soon learn wit at a masquerade.

Miss Hard. It seems all natural to him.

Hard. A good deal assisted by bad company and a French dancing-master.

Miss Hard. Sure, you mistake, papa! a

French dancing-master could never have taught him that timid look—that awkward address—that bashful manner——

Hard. Whose look? whose manner, child?

Miss Hard. Mr. Marlow's; his *mauvaise honte*,¹ his timidity, struck me at the first sight.

Hard. Then your first sight deceived you; for I think him one of the most brazen first sights that ever astonished my senses!

Miss Hard. Sure, sir, you rally! I never saw anyone so modest.

Hard. And can you be serious? I never saw such a bouncing, swaggering puppy since I was born. Bully Dawson² was but a fool to him.

Miss Hard. Surprising! He met me with a respectful bow, a stammering voice, and a look fixed on the ground.

Hard. He met me with a loud voice, a lordly air, and a familiarity that made my blood freeze again.

Miss Hard. He treated me with diffidence and respect; censured the manners of the age; admired the prudence of girls that never laughed; tired me with apologies for being tiresome; then left the room with a bow and "Madam, I would not for the world detain you."

Hard. He spoke to me as if he knew me all his life before; asked twenty questions, and never waited for an answer; interrupted my best remarks with some silly pun; and when I was in my best story of the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene, he asked if I had not a good hand at making punch. Yes, Kate, he asked your father if he was a maker of punch!

Miss Hard. One of us must certainly be mistaken.

Hard. If he be what he has shown himself, I'm determined he shall never have my consent.

Miss Hard. And if he be the sullen thing I take him, he shall never have mine.

Hard. In one thing then we are agreed—to reject him.

Miss Hard. Yes. But upon conditions. For if you should find him less impudent, and I more presuming; if you find him more respectful, and I more importunate—I don't

¹Embarrassment.

²A ruffian or "hector" of Whitefriars.

know—the fellow is well enough for a man. Certainly we don't meet many such at a horse-race in the country.

Hard. If we should find him so— But that's impossible. The first appearance has done my business. I'm seldom deceived in that.

Miss Hard. And yet there may be many good qualities under that first appearance.

Hard. Ay, when a girl finds a fellow's outside to her taste, she then sets about guessing the rest of his furniture. With her, a smooth face stands for good sense and a genteel figure for every virtue.

Miss Hard. I hope, sir, a conversation begun with a compliment to my good sense won't end with a sneer at my understanding?

Hard. Pardon me, Kate. But if young Mr. Brazen can find the art of reconciling contradictions, he may please us both, perhaps.

Miss Hard. And as one of us must be mistaken, what if we go to make further discoveries?

Hard. Agreed. But depend on't I'm in the right.

Miss Hard. And depend on't I'm not much in the wrong. *Exeunt.*

Enter TONY running in with a casket

Tony. Ecod! I have got them. Here they are. My cousin Con's necklaces, bobs,¹ and all. My mother shan't cheat the poor souls out of their fortin neither. Oh, my genius, is that you?

Enter HASTINGS

Hastings. My dear friend, how have you managed with your mother? I hope you have amused her with pretending love for your cousin, and that you are willing to be reconciled at last? Our horses will be refreshed in a short time, and we shall soon be ready to set off.

Tony. And here's something to bear your charges by the way. [*Giving the casket*] Your sweetheart's jewels. Keep them, and hang those, I say, that would rob you of one of them!

Hastings. But how have you procured them from your mother?

Tony. Ask me no questions, and I'll tell

you no fibs. I procured them by the rule of thumb. If I had not a key to every drawer in mother's bureau, how could I go to the ale-house so often as I do? An honest man may rob himself of his own at any time.

Hastings. Thousands do it every day. But to be plain with you, Miss Neville is endeavoring to procure them from her aunt this very instant. If she succeeds, it will be the most delicate way at least of obtaining them.

Tony. Well, keep them, till you know how it will be. But I know how it will be well enough; she'd as soon part with the only sound tooth in her head!

Hastings. But I dread the effects of her resentment, when she finds she has lost them.

Tony. Never you mind her resentment, leave me to manage that. I don't value her resentment the bounce of a cracker. Zounds! here they are! Morrice, Prance!²

Exit HASTINGS.

Enter MRS. HARDCASTLE and MISS NEVILLE

Mrs. Hard. Indeed, Constance, you amaze me. Such a girl as you want jewels? It will be time enough for jewels, my dear, twenty years hence, when your beauty begins to want repairs.

Miss Neville. But what will repair beauty at forty will certainly improve it at twenty, madam.

Mrs. Hard. Yours, my dear, can admit of none. That natural blush is beyond a thousand ornaments. Besides, child, jewels are quite out at present. Don't you see half the ladies of our acquaintance, my lady Killdaylight, and Mrs. Crump, and the rest of them, carry their jewels to town, and bring nothing but paste and marcasites³ back?

Miss Neville. But who knows, madam, but somebody that shall be nameless would like me best with all my little finery about me?

Mrs. Hard. Consult your glass, my dear, and then see, if with such a pair of eyes, you want any better sparklers. What do you think, Tony, my dear, does your cousin Con want any jewels, in your eyes, to set off her beauty?

²Both words here mean "hurry away."

³Marcasite is a mineral often mistaken for gold and silver ore.

¹Pendants.

Tony. That's as thereafter may be.

Miss Neville. My dear aunt, if you knew how it would oblige me.

Mrs. Hard. A parcel of old-fashioned rose and table-cut¹ things. They would make you look like the court of king Solomon at a puppet-show. Besides, I believe I can't readily come at them. They may be missing, for aught I know to the contrary.

Tony. [*Apart to Mrs. Hard.*] Then why don't you tell her so at once, as she's so longing for them. Tell her they're lost. It's the only way to quiet her. Say they're lost, and call me to bear witness.

Mrs. Hard. [*Apart to Tony*] You know, my dear, I'm only keeping them for you. So if I say they're gone, you'll bear me witness, will you? He! he! he!

Tony. Never fear me. Ecod! I'll say I saw them taken out with my own eyes.

Miss Neville. I desire them but for a day, madam. Just to be permitted to show them as relics, and then they may be locked up again.

Mrs. Hard. To be plain with you, my dear Constance, if I could find them, you should have them. They're missing, I assure you. Lost, for aught I know; but we must have patience wherever they are.

Miss Neville. I'll not believe it; this is but a shallow pretense to deny me. I know they're too valuable to be so slightly kept, and as you are to answer for the loss.

Mrs. Hard. Don't be alarmed, Constance. If they be lost, I must restore an equivalent. But my son knows they are missing, and not to be found.

Tony. That I can bear witness to. They are missing, and not to be found, I'll take my oath on't!

Mrs. Hard. You must learn resignation, my dear; for though we lose our fortune, yet we should not lose our patience. See me, how calm I am!

Miss Neville. Ay, people are generally calm at the misfortunes of others.

Mrs. Hard. Now, I wonder a girl of your good sense should waste a thought upon such trumpery. We shall soon find them, and in the meantime you shall make use of my garnets till your jewels be found.

Miss Neville. I detest garnets!

¹ *I. e.*, with flat upper surfaces, cut in angles only at the sides.

Mrs. Hard. The most becoming things in the world to set off a clear complexion. You have often seen how well they look upon me. You *shall* have them. *Exit.*

Miss Neville. I dislike them of all things. You shan't stir.—Was ever anything so provoking—to mislay my own jewels and force me to wear her trumpery?

Tony. Don't be a fool. If she gives you the garnets, take what you can get. The jewels are your own already. I have stolen them out of her bureau, and she does not know it. Fly to your spark, he'll tell you more of the matter. Leave me to manage her.

Miss Neville. My dear cousin!

Tony. Vanish! She's here, and has missed them already. [*Exit Miss Neville*] Zounds! how she fidgets and spits about like a Catharine wheel.²

Enter MRS. HARDCASTLE

Mrs. Hard. Confusion! thieves! robbers! We are cheated, plundered, broke open, undone!

Tony. What's the matter, what's the matter, mamma? I hope nothing has happened to any of the good family!

Mrs. Hard. We are robbed. My bureau has been broke open, the jewels taken out, and I'm undone!

Tony. Oh! is that all? Ha! ha! ha! By the laws, I never saw it better acted in my life. Ecod, I thought you was ruined in earnest, ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Hard. Why, boy, I *am* ruined in earnest. My bureau has been broke open, and all taken away.

Tony. Stick to that; ha, ha, ha! stick to that. I'll bear witness, you know, call me to bear witness.

Mrs. Hard. I tell you, Tony, by all that's precious, the jewels are gone, and I shall be ruined for ever.

Tony. Sure I know they're gone, and I am to say so.

Mrs. Hard. My dearest Tony, but hear me. They're gone, I say.

Tony. By the laws, mamma, you make me for to laugh, ha! ha! I know who took them well enough, ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. Hard. Was there ever such a block-head, that can't tell the difference between

² So named from the spiked wheel used in the martyrdom of St. Catherine of Alexandria.

jest and earnest? I tell you I'm not in jest, booby!

Tony. That's right, that's right; you must be in a bitter passion, and then nobody will suspect either of us. I'll bear witness that they are gone.

Mrs. Hard. Was there ever such a cross-grained brute, that won't hear me! Can you bear witness that you're no better than a fool? Was ever poor woman so beset with fools on one hand, and thieves on the other?

Tony. I can bear witness to that.

Mrs. Hard. Bear witness again, you blockhead, you, and I'll turn you out of the room directly. My poor niece, what will become of *her*? Do you laugh, you unfeeling brute, as if you enjoyed my distress?

Tony. I can bear witness to that.

Mrs. Hard. Do you insult me, monster? I'll teach you to vex your mother, I will!

Tony. I can bear witness to that.

He runs off, she follows him.

Enter MISS HARDCASTLE and MAID

Miss Hard. What an unaccountable creature is that brother of mine, to send them to the house as an inn, ha! ha! I don't wonder at his impudence.

Maid. But what is more, madam, the young gentleman as you passed by in your present dress, asked me if you were the barmaid? He mistook you for the barmaid, madam!

Miss Hard. Did he? Then as I live I'm resolved to keep up the delusion. Tell me, Pimple, how do you like my present dress? Don't you think I look something like Cherry in the *Beaux' Stratagem*?¹

Maid. It's the dress, madam, that every lady wears in the country, but when she visits or receives company.

Miss Hard. And are you sure he does not remember my face or person?

Maid. Certain of it!

Miss Hard. I vow, I thought so; for though we spoke for some time together, yet his fears were such, that he never once looked up during the interview. Indeed, if he had, my bonnet would have kept him from seeing me.

Maid. But what do you hope from keeping him in his mistake?

¹Comedy by George Farquhar. Cherry is the daughter of the landlord in the play.

Miss Hard. In the first place, I shall be *seen*, and that is no small advantage to a girl who brings her face to market. Then I shall perhaps make an acquaintance, and that's no small victory gained over one who never addresses any but the wildest of her sex. But my chief aim is to take my gentleman off his guard, and, like an invisible champion of romance, examine the giant's force before I offer to combat.

Maid. But you are sure you can act your part, and disguise your voice, so that he may mistake that, as he has already mistaken your person?

Miss Hard. Never fear me. I think I have got the true bar cant.—Did your honor call?—Attend the Lion² there.—Pipes and tobacco for the Angel.—The Lamb has been outrageous this half hour!

Maid. It will do, madam. But he's here.

Exit MAID.

Enter MARLOW

Marlow. What a bawling in every part of the house! I have scarce a moment's repose. If I go to the best room, there I find my host and his story; if I fly to the gallery,³ there we have my hostess with her curtsey down to the ground. I have at last got a moment to myself, and now for recollection.

[Walks and muses]

Miss Hard. Did you call, sir? did your honor call?

Marlow. *[Musing]* As for Miss Hardcastle, she's too grave and sentimental for me.

Miss Hard. Did your honor call? *[She still places herself before him, he turning away]*

Marlow. No, child. *[Musing]* Besides, from the glimpse I had of her, I think she squints.

Miss Hard. I'm sure, sir, I heard the bell ring.

Marlow. No, no. *[Musing]* I have pleased my father, however, by coming

²In eighteenth-century inns rooms were generally named, instead of being numbered. "Angel" and "Lamb" are likewise names of rooms.

³Old inns had galleries, upon which the bedrooms opened, round a central yard. This was a feature of Mr. Hardcastle's house which made it look like an inn to the two strangers.

down, and I'll to-morrow please myself by returning.

[*Taking out his tablets, and perusing*]

Miss Hard. Perhaps the other gentleman called, sir?

Marlow. I tell you, no.

Miss Hard. I should be glad to know, sir. We have such a parcel of servants.

Marlow. No, no, I tell you. [*Looks full in her face*] Yes, child, I think I did call. I wanted—I wanted—I vow, child, you are vastly handsome.

Miss Hard. O la, sir, you'll make one ashamed.

Marlow. Never saw a more sprightly malicious eye. Yes, yes, my dear, I did call. Have you got any of your—a—what d'ye call it in the house?

Miss Hard. No, sir, we have been out of that these ten days.

Marlow. One may call in this house, I find, to very little purpose. Suppose I should call for a taste, just by way of trial, of the nectar of your lips; perhaps I might be disappointed in that too!

Miss Hard. Nectar?—nectar? that's a liquor there's no call for in these parts. French, I suppose. We keep no French wines here, sir.

Marlow. Of true English growth, I assure you.

Miss Hard. Then it's odd I should not know it. We brew all sorts of wines in this house, and I have lived here these eighteen years.

Marlow. Eighteen years! Why one would think, child, you kept the bar before you were born. How old are you?

Miss Hard. O sir, I must not tell my age. They say women and music should never be dated.

Marlow. To guess at this distance, you can't be much above forty. [*Approaching*] Yet nearer I don't think so much. [*Approaching*] By coming close to some women they look younger still; but when we come very close indeed— [*Attempting to kiss her*]

Miss Hard. Pray, sir, keep your distance. One would think you wanted to know one's age as they do horses', by mark of mouth.

Marlow. I protest, child, you use me extremely ill. If you keep me at this distance, how is it possible you and I can be ever acquainted?

Miss Hard. And who wants to be acquainted with you? I want no such acquaintance, not I. I'm sure you did not treat Miss Hardcastle that was here awhile ago in this obstropolous manner. I'll warrant me, before her you looked dashed, and kept bowing to the ground, and talked for all the world as if you was before a justice of peace.

Marlow. [*Aside*] Egad! she has hit it, sure enough. [*To her*] In awe of her, child? Ha! ha! ha! A mere awkward, squinting thing! No, no! I find you don't know me. I laughed, and rallied her a little, but I was unwilling to be too severe. No, I could not be too severe, curse me!

Miss Hard. O then, sir, you are a favorite, I find, among the ladies?

Marlow. Yes, my dear, a great favorite. And yet, hang me, I don't see what they find in me to follow. At the Ladies' Club in town¹ I'm called their agreeable Rattle. Rattle, child, is not my real name, but one I'm known by. My name is Solomons—Mr. Solomons, my dear, at your service.

[*Offering to salute her*]

Miss Hard. Hold, sir; you were introducing me to your club, not to yourself. And you're so great a favorite there, you say?

Marlow. Yes, my dear. There's Mrs. Mantrap, Lady Betty Blackleg, the Countess of Sligo, Mrs. Longhorns, old Miss Biddy Buckskin,² and your humble servant, keep up the spirit of the place.

Miss Hard. Then it's a very merry place, I suppose.

Marlow. Yes, as merry as cards, suppers, wine, and old women can make us.

Miss Hard. And their agreeable Rattle, ha! ha! ha!

Marlow. [*Aside*] Egad! I don't quite like this chit. She looks knowing, methinks. You laugh, child?

Miss Hard. I can't but laugh, to think what time they all have for minding their work or their family.

Marlow. [*Aside*] All's well; she don't

¹The reference is to a club called the Female Coterie, in Albemarle Street. Men as well as women belonged to it.

²This is said to be an allusion to Miss Rachel Lloyd, a friend of Horace Walpole, who was also a member of the Club.

laugh at me. [*To her*] Do you ever work, child?

Miss Hard. Ay, sure. There's not a screen or a quilt in the whole house but what can bear witness to that.

Marlow. Odso! Then you must show me your embroidery. I embroider and draw patterns myself a little. If you want a judge of your work you must apply to me.

[*Seizing her hand*]

Miss Hard. Ay, but the colors don't look well by candle-light. You shall see all in the morning.

[*Struggling*]

Marlow. And why not now, my angel? Such beauty fires beyond the power of resistance.—Pshaw! the father here! My old luck: I never nicked seven that I did not throw ames-ace¹ three times following.

Exit MARLOW.

Enter HARDCASTLE, who stands in surprise

Hard. So, madam! So I find *this* is your modest lover. This is your humble admirer that kept his eyes fixed on the ground, and only adored at humble distance. Kate, Kate, art thou not ashamed to deceive your father so?

Miss Hard. Never trust me, dear papa, but he's still the modest man I first took him for; you'll be convinced of it as well as I.

Hard. By the hand of my body, I believe his impudence is infectious! Didn't I see him seize your hand? Didn't I see him haul you about like a milkmaid? and now you talk of his respect and his modesty, forsooth!

Miss Hard. But if I shortly convince you of his modesty, that he has only the faults that will pass off with time, and the virtues that will improve with age, I hope you'll forgive him.

Hard. The girl would actually make one run mad! I tell you I'll not be convinced. I am convinced. He has scarcely been three hours in the house, and he has already encroached on all my prerogatives. You may like his impudence, and call it modesty. But my son-in-law, madam, must have very different qualifications.

Miss Hard. Sir, I ask but this night to convince you.

Hard. You shall not have half the time,

¹To "nick seven" is to throw seven (a lucky throw) with the dice. "Ames-ace," properly ambs ace, two aces thrown together, is the lowest possible throw.

for I have thoughts of turning him out this very hour.

Miss Hard. Give me that hour then, and I hope to satisfy you.

Hard. Well, an hour let it be then. But I'll have no trifling with your father. All fair and open, do you mind me?

Miss Hard. I hope, sir, you have ever found that I considered your commands as my pride; for your kindness is such, that my duty as yet has been inclination. *Exeunt.*

ACT IV

SCENE I—*Same as in preceding Act.*

Enter HASTINGS and MISS NEVILLE

Hastings. You surprise me! Sir Charles Marlow expected here this night? Where have you had your information?

Miss Neville. You may depend upon it. I just saw his letter to Mr. Hardcastle, in which he tells him he intends setting out a few hours after his son.

Hastings. Then, my Constance, all must be completed before he arrives. He knows me; and should he find me here, would discover my name, and perhaps my designs, to the rest of the family.

Miss Neville. The jewels, I hope, are safe.

Hastings. Yes, yes. I have sent them to Marlow, who keeps the keys of our baggage. In the meantime, I'll go to prepare matters for our elopement. I have had the 'Squire's promise of a fresh pair of horses; and, if I should not see him again, will write him further directions. *Exit.*

Miss Neville. Well, success attend you! In the meantime, I'll go amuse my aunt with the old pretense of a violent passion for my cousin. *Exit.*

Enter MARLOW, followed by a SERVANT

Marlow. I wonder what Hastings could mean by sending me so valuable a thing as a casket to keep for him, when he knows the only place I have is the seat of a post-coach at an inn-door? Have you deposited the casket with the landlady, as I ordered you? Have you put it into her own hands?

Servant. Yes, your honor.

Marlow. She said she'd keep it safe, did she?

Servant. Yes, she said she'd keep it safe

enough; she asked me how I came by it? and she said she had a great mind to make me give an account of myself. *Exit SERVANT.*

Marlow. Ha! ha! ha! They're safe, however. What an unaccountable set of beings have we got amongst! This little barmaid, though, runs in my head most strangely, and drives out the absurdities of all the rest of the family. She's mine, she must be mine, or I'm greatly mistaken!

Enter HASTINGS

Hastings. Bless me! I quite forgot to tell her that I intended to prepare at the bottom of the garden. Marlow here, and in spirits too!

Marlow. Give me joy, George! Crown me, shadow me with laurels! Well, George, after all, we modest fellows don't want for success among the women.

Hastings. Some women, you mean. But what success has your honor's modesty been crowned with now, that it grows so insolent upon us?

Marlow. Didn't you see the tempting, brisk, lovely little thing that runs about the house with a bunch of keys to its girdle?

Hastings. Well! and what then?

Marlow. She's mine, you rogue, you. Such fire, such motion, such eyes, such lips—— But egad! she would not let me kiss them, though.

Hastings. But are you sure, so very sure of her?

Marlow. Why, man, she talked of showing me her work above-stairs, and I am to improve the pattern.

Hastings. But how can you, Charles, go about to rob a woman of her honor?

Marlow. Pshaw! pshaw! we all know the honor of the barmaid of an inn. I don't intend to rob her, take my word for it; there's nothing in this house I shan't honestly pay for!

Hastings. I believe the girl has virtue.

Marlow. And if she has, I should be the last man in the world that would attempt to corrupt it.

Hastings. You have taken care, I hope, of the casket I sent you to lock up? It's in safety?

Marlow. Yes, yes. It's safe enough. I have taken care of it. But how could you think the seat of a post-coach at the inn-door

a place of safety? Ah, numbskull! I have taken better precautions for you than you did for yourself.—I have——

Hastings. What?

Marlow. I have sent it to the landlady to keep for you.

Hastings. To the landlady!

Marlow. The landlady.

Hastings. You did?

Marlow. I did. She's to be answerable for its forthcoming, you know.

Hastings. Yes, she'll bring it forth with a witness.

Marlow. Wasn't I right? I believe you'll allow that I acted prudently upon this occasion?

Hastings. [*Aside*] He must not see my uneasiness.

Marlow. You seem a little disconcerted, though, methinks. Sure nothing has happened?

Hastings. No, nothing. Never was I in better spirits in all my life. And so you left it with the landlady, who, no doubt, very readily undertook the charge?

Marlow. Rather too readily. For she not only kept the casket, but, through her great precaution, was going to keep the messenger too. Ha! ha! ha!

Hastings. He! he! he! They're safe, however.

Marlow. As a guinea in a miser's purse.

Hastings. [*Aside*] So now all hopes of fortune are at an end, and we must set off without it. [*To him*] Well, Charles, I'll leave you to your meditations on the pretty barmaid, and—he! he! he!—may you be as successful for yourself as you have been for me. *Exit.*

Marlow. Thank ye, George; I ask no more. Ha! ha! ha!

Enter HARDCASTLE

Hard. I no longer know my own house. It's turned all topsy-turvy. His servants have got drunk already. I'll bear it no longer; and yet, from my respect for his father, I'll be calm. [*To him*] Mr. Marlow, your servant. I'm your very humble servant. [*Bowing low*]

Marlow. Sir, your humble servant. [*Aside*] What's to be the wonder now?

Hard. I believe, sir, you must be sensible, sir, that no man alive ought to be more wel-

come than your father's son, sir. I hope you think so?

Marlow. I do, from my soul, sir. I don't want much entreaty. I generally make my father's son welcome wherever he goes.

Hard. I believe you do, from my soul, sir. But though I say nothing to your own conduct, that of your servants is insufferable. Their manner of drinking is setting a very bad example in this house, I assure you.

Marlow. I protest, my very good sir, that's no fault of mine. If they don't drink as they ought *they* are to blame. I ordered them not to spare the cellar; I did, I assure you. [*To the side scene*] Here, let one of my servants come up. [*To him*] My positive directions were, that as I did not drink myself, they should make up for my deficiencies below.

Hard. Then they had your orders for what they do? I'm satisfied!

Marlow. They had, I assure you. You shall hear from one of themselves.

Enter SERVANT, drunk

Marlow. You, Jeremy! Come forward, sirrah! What were my orders? Were you not told to drink freely, and call for what you thought fit, for the good of the house?

Hard. [*Aside*] I begin to lose my patience.

Jeremy. Please your honor, liberty and Fleet Street for ever! Though I'm but a servant, I'm as good as another man. I'll drink for no man before supper, sir, dammy! Good liquor will sit upon a good supper, but a good supper will not sit upon—hiccup—upon my conscience, sir.

Marlow. You see, my old friend, the fellow is as drunk as he can possibly be. I don't know what you'd have more, unless you'd have the poor devil soused in a beer-barrel.

Hard. [*Aside*] Zounds! He'll drive me distracted if I contain myself any longer.—Mr. Marlow! Sir, I have submitted to your insolence for more than four hours, and I see no likelihood of its coming to an end. I'm now resolved to be master here, sir, and I desire that you and your drunken pack may leave my house directly.

Marlow. Leave your house!—Sure, you jest, my good friend! What, when I'm doing what I can to please you?

Hard. I tell you, sir, you don't please me; so I desire you'll leave my house.

Marlow. Sure, you cannot be serious! At this time of night, and such a night? You only mean to banter me.

Hard. I tell you, sir, I'm serious; and, now that my passions are roused, I say this house is mine, sir; this house is mine, and I command you to leave it directly.

Marlow. Ha! ha! ha! A puddle in a storm. I shan't stir a step, I assure you. [*In a serious tone*] This your house, fellow! It's my house. This is my house. Mine, while I choose to stay. What right have you to bid me leave this house, sir? I never met with such impudence, curse me, never in my whole life before!

Hard. Nor I, confound me if ever I did. To come to my house, to call for what he likes, to turn me out of my own chair, to insult the family, to order his servants to get drunk, and then to tell me "This house is mine, sir!" By all that's impudent, it makes me laugh. Ha! ha! ha! Pray, sir [*Bantering*], as you take the house, what think you of taking the rest of the furniture? There's a pair of silver candlesticks, and there's a fire-screen, and here's a pair of brazen-nosed bellows; perhaps you may take a fancy to them?

Marlow. Bring me your bill, sir, bring me your bill, and let's make no more words about it.

Hard. There are a set of prints, too. What think you of the *Rake's Progress*¹ for your own apartment?

Marlow. Bring me your bill, I say; and I'll leave you and your infernal house directly.

Hard. Then there's a mahogany table that you may see your own face in.

Marlow. My bill, I say.

Hard. I had forgot the great chair, for your own particular slumbers after a hearty meal.

Marlow. Zounds! bring me my bill, I say, and let's hear no more on't.

Hard. Young man, young man, from your father's letter to me, I was taught to expect a well-bred, modest man as a visitor here, but now I find him no better than a coxcomb and a bully; but he will be down here presently, and shall hear more of it. *Exit.*

¹The series of engravings by Hogarth.

Marlow. How's this! Sure, I have not mistaken the house? Everything looks like an inn. The servants cry "Coming!" the attendance is awkward; the barmaid, too, to attend us. But she's here, and will further inform me. Whither so fast, child? A word with you.

Enter MISS HARDCASTLE

Miss Hard. Let it be short then; I'm in a hurry. [*Aside*] I believe he begins to find out his mistake, but it's too soon quite to undeceive him.

Marlow. Pray, child, answer me one question. What are you, and what may your business in this house be?

Miss Hard. A relation of the family, sir.

Marlow. What, a poor relation?

Miss Hard. Yes, sir; a poor relation appointed to keep the keys, and to see that the guests want nothing in my power to give them.

Marlow. That is, you act as the barmaid of this inn.

Miss Hard. Inn! O law!—What brought that in your head? One of the best families in the county keep an inn! Ha, ha, ha, old Mr. Hardcastle's house an inn!

Marlow. Mr. Hardcastle's house! Is this house Mr. Hardcastle's house, child?

Miss Hard. Ay, sure. Whose else should it be?

Marlow. So then all's out, and I have been damnably imposed on. Oh, confound my stupid head, I shall be laughed at over the whole town. I shall be stuck up in caricature in all the print-shops. The *Dullissimo Macaroni*.¹ To mistake this house of all others for an inn, and my father's old friend for an innkeeper! What a swaggering puppy must he take me for! What a silly puppy do I find myself! There again, may I be hanged, my dear, but I mistook you for the barmaid!

Miss Hard. Dear me! dear me! I'm sure there's nothing in my behavior to put me upon a level with one of that stamp.

Marlow. Nothing, my dear, nothing. But I was in for a list of blunders, and could not help making you a subscriber. My

stupidity saw everything the wrong way. I mistook your assiduity for assurance, and your simplicity for allurements. But it's over—this house I no more show my face in!

Miss Hard. I hope, sir, I have done nothing to disoblige you. I'm sure I should be sorry to affront any gentleman who has been so polite, and said so many civil things to me. I'm sure I should be sorry [*Pretending to cry*] if he left the family upon my account. I'm sure I should be sorry people said anything amiss, since I have no fortune but my character.

Marlow. [*Aside*] By heaven, she weeps. This is the first mark of tenderness I ever had from a modest woman, and it touches me. [*To her*] Excuse me, my lovely girl, you are the only part of the family I leave with reluctance. But to be plain with you, the difference of our birth, fortune, and education, makes an honorable connection impossible; and I can never harbor a thought of seducing simplicity that trusted in my honor, or bringing ruin upon one whose only fault was being too lovely.

Miss Hard. [*Aside*] Generous man! I now begin to admire him. [*To him*] But I'm sure my family is as good as Miss Hardcastle's; and though I'm poor, that's no great misfortune to a contented mind, and, until this moment, I never thought that it was bad to want fortune.

Marlow. And why now, my pretty simplicity?

Miss Hard. Because it puts me at a distance from one, that if I had a thousand pound I would give it all to.

Marlow. [*Aside*] This simplicity bewitches me, so that if I stay I'm undone. I must make one bold effort, and leave her. [*To her*] Your partiality in my favor, my dear, touches me most sensibly, and were I to live for myself alone, I could easily fix my choice. But I owe too much to the opinion of the world, too much to the authority of a father; so that—I can scarcely speak it—it affects me. Farewell!

Exit.

Miss Hard. I never knew half his merit till now. He shall not go, if I have power or art to detain him. I'll still preserve the character in which I stooped to conquer, but will undeceive my papa, who perhaps may laugh him out of his resolution. *Exit.*

¹An allusion to a series of satirical prints at this time appearing in London, in which well-known individuals were caricatured under such titles as that in the text. Macaroni was the current name for a dandy.

Enter TONY, MISS NEVILLE

Tony. Ay, you may steal for yourselves the next time. I have done my duty. She has got the jewels again, that's a sure thing; but she believes it was all a mistake of the servants.

Miss Neville. But, my dear cousin, sure you won't forsake us in this distress? If she in the least suspects that I am going off, I shall certainly be locked up, or sent to my aunt Pedigree's, which is ten times worse.

Tony. To be sure, aunts of all kinds are damned bad things. But what can I do? I have got you a pair of horses that will fly like Whistlejacket,¹ and I'm sure you can't say but I have courted you nicely before her face. Here she comes, we must court a bit or two more, for fear she should suspect us. *[They retire, and seem to fondle]*

Enter MRS. HARDCASTLE

Mrs. Hard. Well, I was greatly fluttered, to be sure. But my son tells me it was all a mistake of the servants. I shan't be easy, however, till they are fairly married, and then let her keep her own fortune. But what do I see?—fondling together, as I'm alive! I never saw Tony so sprightly before. Ah, have I caught you, my pretty doves! What, billing, exchanging stolen glances, and broken murmurs! Ah!

Tony. As for murmurs, mother, we grumble a little now and then, to be sure. But there's no love lost between us.

Mrs. Hard. A mere sprinkling, Tony, upon the flame, only to make it burn brighter.

Miss Neville. Cousin Tony promises to give us more of his company at home. Indeed, he shan't leave us any more. It won't leave us, cousin Tony, will it?

Tony. Oh, it's a pretty creature. No, I'd sooner leave my horse in a pound, than leave you when you smile upon one so. Your laugh makes you so becoming.

Miss Neville. Agreeable cousin! Who can help admiring that natural humor, that pleasant, broad, red, thoughtless *[Patting his cheek]*—ah! it's a bold face.

Mrs. Hard. Pretty innocence!

Tony. I'm sure I always loved cousin

Con's hazel eyes, and her pretty long fingers, that she twists this way and that over the haspicholls² like a parcel of bobbins.

Mrs. Hard. Ah, he would charm the bird from the tree. I was never so happy before. My boy takes after his father, poor Mr. Lumpkin, exactly. The jewels, my dear Con, shall be yours incontinently. You shall have them. Isn't he a sweet boy, my dear? You shall be married to-morrow, and we'll put off the rest of his education, like Dr. Drowsy's sermons, to a fitter opportunity.

Enter DIGGORY

Diggory. Where's the 'squire? I have got a letter for your worship.

Tony. Give it to my mamma. She reads all my letters first.

Diggory. I had orders to deliver it into your own hands.

Tony. Who does it come from?

Diggory. Your worship mun ask that of the letter itself.

Tony. I could wish to know, though.

[Turning the letter, and gazing on it]

Miss Neville. *[Aside]* Undone, undone! A letter to him from Hastings. I know the hand. If my aunt sees it we are ruined for ever. I'll keep her employed a little if I can. *[To Mrs. Hardcastle]* But I have not told you, madam, of my cousin's smart answer just now to Mr. Marlow. We so laughed—you must know, madam—this way a little, for he must not hear us. *[They confer]*

Tony. *[Still gazing]* A damned cramp piece of penmanship as ever I saw in my life. I can read your print-hand very well; but here there are such handles, and shanks, and dashes, that one can scarce tell the head from the tail. "To Anthony Lumpkin, Esquire." It's very odd, I can read the outside of my letters, where my own name is, well enough. But when I come to open it, it's all—buzz. That's hard, very hard; for the inside of the letter is always the cream of the correspondence.

Mrs. Hard. Ha! ha! ha! Very well, very well. And so my son was too hard for the philosopher?

Miss Neville. Yes, madam; but you must hear the rest, madam. A little more this way,

¹A famous race-horse, which "ran with abundant glory at York and Newmarket in 1754."

²*I. e.*, harpsichord.

or he may hear us. You'll hear how he puzzled him again.

Mrs. Hard. He seems strangely puzzled now himself, methinks.

Tony. [*Still gazing*] A damned up-and-down hand, as if it was disguised in liquor. [*Reading*] "Dear Sir,"—ay, that's that. Then there's an M, and a T, and an S, but whether the next be an izzard or an R, confound me, I cannot tell!

Mrs. Hard. What's that, my dear? Can I give you any assistance?

Miss Neville. Pray, aunt, let me read it. Nobody reads a cramp hand better than I. [*Twitching the letter from her*] Do you know who it is from?

Tony. Can't tell, except from Dick Ginger the feeder.¹

Miss Neville. Ay, so it is. [*Pretending to read*] Dear 'Squire, Hoping that you're in health, as I am at this present. The gentlemen of the Shakebag² club has cut the gentlemen of Goose-green quite out of feather. The odds—um—odd battle—um—long fighting—um, here, here, it's all about cocks, and fighting; it's of no consequence; here, put it up, put it up.

[*Thrusting the crumpled letter upon him*]

Tony. But I tell you, miss, it's of all the consequence in the world! I would not lose the rest of it for a guinea. Here, mother, do you make it out? Of no consequence!

[*Giving Mrs. Hardcastle the letter*]

Mrs. Hard. How's this! [*Reads*] "Dear 'Squire, I'm now waiting for Miss Neville, with a post-chaise and pair, at the bottom of the garden, but I find my horses yet unable to perform the journey. I expect you'll assist us with a pair of fresh horses, as you promised. Dispatch is necessary, as the hag,"—ay, the *hag*—"your mother, will otherwise suspect us. Yours, Hastings." Grant me patience. I shall run distracted! My rage chokes me.

Miss Neville. I hope, madam, you'll suspend your resentment for a few moments, and not impute to me any impertinence or sinister design that belongs to another.

Mrs. Hard. [*Curtseying very low*] Fine spoken, madam; you are most miraculously polite and engaging, and quite the very pink

of courtesy and circumspection, madam. [*Changing her tone*] And you, you great ill-fashioned oaf, with scarce sense enough to keep your mouth shut—were you too joined against me? But I'll defeat all your plots in a moment. As for you, madam, since you have got a pair of fresh horses ready, it would be cruel to disappoint them. So, if you please, instead of running away with your spark, prepare this very moment to run off with me. Your old aunt Pedigree will keep you secure, I'll warrant me. You too, sir, may mount your horse and guard us upon the way. Here, Thomas, Roger, Diggory! I'll show you that I wish you better than you do yourselves. *Exit.*

Miss Neville. So now I'm completely ruined.

Tony. Ay, that's a sure thing.

Miss Neville. What better could be expected from being connected with such a stupid fool—and after all the nods and signs I made him.

Tony. By the laws, miss, it was your own cleverness, and not my stupidity, that did your business. You were so nice and so busy with your Shakebags and Goose-greens, that I thought you could never be making believe.

Enter HASTINGS

Hastings. So, sir, I find by my servant that you have shown my letter, and betrayed us. Was this well done, young gentleman?

Tony. Here's another. Ask miss there who betrayed you. Ecod, it was her doing, not mine.

Enter MARLOW

Marlow. So I have been finely used here among you. Rendered contemptible, driven into ill manners, despised, insulted, laughed at.

Tony. Here's another. We shall have old Bedlam broke loose presently.

Miss Neville. And there, sir, is the gentleman to whom we all owe every obligation.

Marlow. What can I say to him, a mere boy, an idiot, whose ignorance and age are a protection?

Hastings. A poor contemptible booby, that would but disgrace correction.

¹ I. e., cock-feeder.

² A shake-bag is said to be a large game-cock.

Miss Neville. Yet with cunning and malice enough to make himself merry with all our embarrassments.

Hastings. An insensible cub.

Marlow. Replete with tricks and mischief.

Tony. Baw! damme, but I'll fight you both one after the other—with baskets.¹

Marlow. As for him, he's below resentment. But your conduct, Mr. Hastings, requires an explanation. You knew of my mistakes, yet would not undeceive me.

Hastings. Tortured as I am with my own disappointments, is this a time for explanations? It is not friendly, Mr. Marlow.

Marlow. But, sir—

Miss Neville. Mr. Marlow, we never kept on your mistake till it was too late to undeceive you. Be pacified.

Enter SERVANT

Servant. My mistress desires you'll get ready immediately, madam. The horses are putting to. Your hat and things are in the next room. We are to go thirty miles before morning.

Exit SERVANT.

Miss Neville. Well, well; I'll come presently.

Marlow. [To *Hastings*] Was it well done, sir, to assist in rendering me ridiculous?—to hang me out for the scorn of all my acquaintance? Depend upon it, sir, I shall expect an explanation.

Hastings. Was it well done, sir, if you're upon that subject, to deliver what I entrusted to yourself to the care of another, sir?

Miss Neville. Mr. Hastings! Mr. Marlow! Why will you increase my distress by this groundless dispute? I implore, I entreat you—

Enter SERVANT

Servant. Your cloak, madam. My mistress is impatient.

Miss Neville. I come. [Exit *Servant*] Pray be pacified; if I leave you thus, I shall die with apprehension.

Enter SERVANT

Servant. Your fan, muff, and gloves, madam. The horses are waiting.

Miss Neville. O Mr. Marlow! if you knew what a scene of constraint and ill-nature lies

before me, I'm sure it would convert your resentment into pity.

Marlow. I'm so distracted with a variety of passions that I don't know what I do. Forgive me, madam. George, forgive me. You know my hasty temper, and should not exasperate it.

Hastings. The torture of my situation is my only excuse.

Miss Neville. Well, my dear Hastings, if you have that esteem for me that I think, that I am sure, you have, your constancy for three years will but increase the happiness of our future connection. If—

Mrs. Hard. [Within] Miss Neville. Constance—why, Constance, I say.

Miss Neville. I'm coming. Well, constancy. Remember, constancy is the word.

Exit followed by SERVANT.

Hastings. My heart! How can I support this? To be so near happiness, and such happiness!

Marlow. [To *Tony*] You see now, young gentleman, the effects of your folly. What might be amusement to you is here disappointment, and even distress.

Tony. [From a reverie] Ecod, I have hit it. It's here. Your hands! Yours. and yours, my poor Sulky.—My boots there, ho! Meet me two hours hence at the bottom of the garden; and if you don't find Tony Lumpkin a more good-natured fellow than you thought for, I'll give you leave to take my best horse, and Bet Bouncer into the bargain!—Come along. My boots, ho!

Exeunt.

ACT V

SCENE I—*Same as in preceding Act*

Enter HASTINGS and SERVANT

Hastings. You saw the old lady and Miss Neville drive off, you say?

Servant. Yes, your honor. They went off in a post-coach, and the young 'squire went on horseback. They're thirty miles off by this time.

Hastings. Then all my hopes are over.

Servant. Yes, sir. Old Sir Charles is arrived. He and the old gentleman of the house have been laughing at Mr. Marlow's mistake this half hour. They are coming this way.

¹I. e., singlesticks, having wicker-work handguards.

Hastings. Then I must not be seen. So now to my fruitless appointment at the bottom of the garden. This is about the time. *Exeunt.*

Enter SIR CHARLES and HARDCASTLE

Hard. Ha! ha! ha! The peremptory tone in which he sent forth his sublime commands!

Sir Charles. And the reserve with which I suppose he treated all your advances.

Hard. And yet he might have seen something in me above a common innkeeper too.

Sir Charles. Yes, Dick, but he mistook you for an uncommon innkeeper, ha! ha! ha!

Hard. Well, I'm in too good spirits to think of anything but joy. Yes, my dear friend, this union of our families will make our personal friendships hereditary; and though my daughter's fortune is but small——

Sir Charles. Why, Dick, will you talk of fortune to me? My son is possessed of more than a competence already, and can want nothing but a good and virtuous girl to share his happiness and increase it. If they like each other, as you say they do——

Hard. If, man! I tell you they *do* like each other. My daughter as good as told me so.

Sir Charles. But girls are apt to flatter themselves, you know.

Hard. I saw him grasp her hand in the warmest manner myself; and here he comes to put you out of your *ifs*, I warrant him.

Enter MARLOW

Marlow. I come, sir, once more, to ask pardon for my strange conduct. I can scarce reflect on my insolence without confusion.

Hard. Tut, boy, a trifle! You take it too gravely. An hour or two's laughing with my daughter will set all to rights again. She'll never like you the worse for it.

Marlow. Sir, I shall be always proud of her approbation.

Hard. Approbation is but a cold word, Mr. Marlow; if I am not deceived, you have something more than approbation thereabouts. You take me?

Marlow. Really, sir, I have not that happiness.

Hard. Come, boy, I'm an old fellow, and know what's what as well as you that are younger. I know what has passed between you; but mum.

Marlow. Sure, sir, nothing has passed between us but the most profound respect on my side and the most distant reserve on hers. You don't think, sir, that my impudence has been passed upon all the rest of the family!

Hard. Impudence! No, I don't say that—not quite impudence—though girls like to be played with, and rumbled a little too, sometimes. But she has told no tales, I assure you.

Marlow. I never gave her the slightest cause.

Hard. Well, well, I like modesty in its place well enough. But this is over-acting, young gentleman. You may be open. Your father and I will like you the better for it.

Marlow. May I die, sir, if I ever——

Hard. I tell you, she don't dislike you; and as I'm sure you like her——

Marlow. Dear sir—I protest, sir——

Hard. I see no reason why you should not be joined as fast as the parson can tie you.

Marlow. But hear me, sir——

Hard. Your father approves the match, I admire it, every moment's delay will be doing mischief, so——

Marlow. But why won't you hear me? By all that's just and true, I never gave Miss Hardcastle the slightest mark of my attachment, or even the most distant hint to suspect me of affection. We had but one interview, and that was formal, modest, and uninteresting.

Hard. [*Aside*] This fellow's formal modest impudence is beyond bearing.

Sir Charles. And you never grasped her hand, or made any protestations!

Marlow. As heaven is my witness, I came down in obedience to your commands. I saw the lady without emotion, and parted without reluctance. I hope you'll exact no further proofs of my duty, nor prevent me from leaving a house in which I suffer so many mortifications. *Exit.*

Sir Charles. I'm astonished at the air of sincerity with which he parted.

Hard. And I'm astonished at the deliberate intrepidity of his assurance.

Sir Charles. I dare pledge my life and honor upon his truth.

Hard. Here comes my daughter, and I would stake my happiness upon her veracity.

Enter MISS HARDCASTLE

Hard. Kate, come hither, child. Answer us sincerely, and without reserve; has Mr. Marlow made you any professions of love and affection?

Miss Hard. The question is very abrupt, sir. But since you require unreserved sincerity, I think he has.

Hard. [To *Sir Charles*] You see.

Sir Charles. And pray, madam, have you and my son had more than one interview?

Miss Hard. Yes, sir, several.

Hard. [To *Sir Charles*] You see.

Sir Charles. But did he profess any attachment?

Miss Hard. A lasting one.

Sir Charles. Did he talk of love?

Miss Hard. Much, sir.

Sir Charles. Amazing! And all this formally?

Miss Hard. Formally.

Hard. Now, my friend, I hope you are satisfied.

Sir Charles. And how did he behave, madam?

Miss Hard. As most professed admirers do. Said some civil things of my face, talked much of his want of merit and the greatness of mine, mentioned his heart, gave a short tragedy speech, and ended with pretended rapture.

Sir Charles. Now I'm perfectly convinced, indeed. I know his conversation among women to be modest and submissive. This forward, canting, ranting manner by no means describes him, and I am confident he never sat for the picture.

Miss Hard. Then what, sir, if I should convince you to your face of my sincerity? If you and my papa, in about half-an-hour, will place yourselves behind that screen, you shall hear him declare his passion to me in person.

Sir Charles. Agreed. And if I find him what you describe, all my happiness in him must have an end. *Exeunt.*

Miss Hard. And if you don't find him what I describe—I fear my happiness must never have a beginning. *Exit.*

SCENE II—*The back of the Garden.*

Enter HASTINGS

Hastings. What an idiot am I, to wait here for a fellow who probably takes a delight in mortifying me! He never intended to be punctual, and I'll wait no longer. What do I see? It is he, and perhaps with news of my Constance.

Enter TONY, booted and spattered

Hastings. My honest 'squire! I now find you a man of your word. This looks like friendship.

Tony. Ay, I'm your friend, and the best friend you have in the world, if you knew but all. This riding by night, by the by, is cursedly tiresome. It has shook me worse than the basket of a stage-coach.

Hastings. But how? Where did you leave your fellow-travelers? Are they in safety? Are they housed?

Tony. Five and twenty miles in two hours and a half is no such bad driving. The poor beasts have smoked for it. Rabbit me, but I'd rather ride forty miles after a fox than ten with such varmint.

Hastings. Well, but where have you left the ladies? I die with impatience.

Tony. Left them? Why, where should I leave them but where I found them?

Hastings. This is a riddle.

Tony. Riddle me this,¹ then. What's that goes round the house and round the house, and never touches the house?

Hastings. I'm still astray.

Tony. Why, that's it, mon. I have led them astray. By jingo, there's not a pond or slough within five miles of the place but they can tell the taste of.

Hastings. Ha, ha, ha, I understand; you took them in a round while they supposed themselves going forward. And so you have at last brought them home again.

Tony. You shall hear. I first took them down Feather-bed Lane, where we stuck fast in the mud. I then rattled them crack over the stones of Up-and-down Hill. I then introduced them to the gibbet on Heavy-tree Heath, and from that, with a circum-bendibus,² I fairly lodged them in the horse-pond at the bottom of the garden.

¹Solve this riddle.

²With a circuit.

Hastings. But no accident, I hope?

Tony. No, no. Only mother is con-foundedly frightened. She thinks herself forty miles off. She's sick of the journey, and the cattle can scarce crawl. So if your own horses be ready, you may whip off with cousin, and I'll be bound that no soul here can budge a foot to follow you.

Hastings. My dear friend, how can I be grateful?

Tony. Ay, now it's dear friend, noble 'squire. Just now, it was all idiot, cub, and run me through the guts. Damn *your* way of fighting, I say. After we take a knock in this part of the country, we kiss and be friends. But if you had run me through the guts, then I should be dead and you might go kiss the hangman.

Hastings. The rebuke is just. But I must hasten to relieve Miss Neville; if you keep the old lady employed, I promise to take care of the young one. *Exit HASTINGS.*

Tony. Never fear me. Here she comes. Vanish. She's got from the pond, and dragged up to the waist like a mermaid.

Enter MRS. HARDCASTLE

Mrs. Hard. Oh, Tony, I'm killed! Shook! Battered to death! I shall never survive it. That last jolt that laid us against the quick-set¹ hedge has done my business.

Tony. Alack, mamma, it was all your own fault. You would be for running away by night, without knowing one inch of the way.

Mrs. Hard. I wish we were at home again. I never met so many accidents in so short a journey. Drenched in the mud, overturned in a ditch, stuck fast in a slough, jolted to a jelly, and at last to lose our way! Whereabouts do you think we are, Tony?

Tony. By my guess we should be upon Crackskull Common, about forty miles from home.

Mrs. Hard. O lud! O lud! the most notorious spot in all the country. We only want a robbery to make a complete night on't.

Tony. Don't be afraid, mamma, don't be afraid. Two of the five that kept here are hanged, and the other three may not find us. Don't be afraid.—Is that a man that's

galloping behind us? No; it's only a tree. Don't be afraid.

Mrs. Hard. The fright will certainly kill me.

Tony. Do you see anything like a black hat moving behind the thicket?

Mrs. Hard. O death!

Tony. No, it's only a cow. Don't be afraid, mamma, don't be afraid.

Mrs. Hard. As I'm alive, Tony, I see a man coming towards us. Ah! I'm sure on't. If he perceives us, we are undone.

Tony [Aside] Father-in-law, by all that's unlucky, come to take one of his night walks. *[To her]* Ah, it's a highwayman, with pistols as long as my arm. A damned ill-looking fellow.

Mrs. Hard. Good heaven defend us! He approaches.

Tony. Do you hide yourself in that thicket, and leave me to manage him. If there be any danger I'll cough and cry hem. When I cough be sure to keep close.

[Mrs. Hardcastle hides behind a tree in the back scene]

Enter HARDCASTLE

Hard. I'm mistaken, or I heard voices of people in want of help. Oh, Tony, is that you? I did not expect you so soon back. Are your mother and her charge in safety?

Tony. Very safe, sir, at my aunt Pedigree's. Hem.

Mrs. Hard. [From behind] Ah! I find there's danger.

Hard. Forty miles in three hours; sure, that's too much, my youngster.

Tony. Stout horses and willing minds make short journeys, as they say. Hem.

Mrs. Hard. [From behind] Sure he'll do the dear boy no harm.

Hard. But I heard a voice here; I should be glad to know from whence it came.

Tony. It was I, sir, talking to myself, s'r. I was saying that forty miles in four hours was very good going. Hem. As to be sure it was. Hem. I have got a sort of cold by being out in the air. We'll go in if you please. Hem.

Hard. But if you talked to yourself, you did not answer yourself. I am certain I heard two voices, and am resolved *[Raising his voice]* to find the other out.

¹Formed of living plants.

Mrs. Hard. [From behind] Oh! he's coming to find me out. Oh!

Tony. What need you go, sir, if I tell you? Hem. I'll lay down my life for the truth—hem—I'll tell you all, sir.

[Detaining him]

Hard. I tell you I will not be detained. I insist on seeing. It's in vain to expect I'll believe you.

Mrs. Hard. [Running forward from behind] O lud, he'll murder my poor boy, my darling. Here, good gentleman, whet your rage upon me. Take my money, my life, but spare that young gentleman, spare my child, if you have any mercy.

Hard. My wife! as I'm a Christian. From whence can she come, or what does she mean?

Mrs. Hard. [Kneeling] Take compassion on us, good Mr. Highwayman. Take our money, our watches, all we have, but spare our lives. We will never bring you to justice, indeed we won't, good Mr. Highwayman.

Hard. I believe the woman's out of her senses. What, Dorothy, don't you know me?

Mrs. Hard. Mr. Hardcastle, as I'm alive! My fears blinded me. But who, my dear, could have expected to meet you here, in this frightful place, so far from home. What has brought you to follow us?

Hard. Sure, Dorothy, you have not lost your wits! So far from home, when you are within forty yards of your own door! [To him] This is one of your old tricks, you graceless rogue, you! [To her] Don't you know the gate, and the mulberry-tree; and don't you remember the horsepond, my dear?

Mrs. Hard. Yes, I shall remember the horsepond as long as I live; I have caught my death in it. [To Tony] And is it to you, you graceless varlet, I owe all this? I'll teach you to abuse your mother, I will.

Tony. Ecod, mother, all the parish says you have spoiled me, and so you may take the fruits on't.

Mrs. Hard. I'll spoil you, I will.

[Follows him off the stage. Exeunt.]

Hard. There's morality, however, in his reply. Exit.

Enter HASTINGS and MISS NEVILLE

Hastings. My dear Constance, why will you deliberate thus? If we delay a moment,

all is lost for ever. Pluck up a little resolution, and we shall soon be out of the reach of her malignity.

Miss Neville. I find it impossible. My spirits are so sunk with the agitations I have suffered that I am unable to face any new danger. Two or three years' patience will at last crown us with happiness.

Hastings. Such a tedious delay is worse than inconstancy. Let us fly, my charmer. Let us date our happiness from this very moment. Perish fortune! Love and content will increase what we possess beyond a monarch's revenue. Let me prevail.

Miss Neville. No, Mr. Hastings, no. Prudence once more comes to my relief, and I will obey its dictates. In the moment of passion, fortune may be despised, but it ever produces a lasting repentance. I'm resolved to apply to Mr. Hardcastle's compassion and justice for redress.

Hastings. But though he had the will, he has not the power to relieve you.

Miss Neville. But he has influence, and upon that I am resolved to rely.

Hastings. I have no hopes. But since you persist, I must reluctantly obey you.

Exeunt.

SCENE III—Living-room of Hardcastle's House.

Enter SIR CHARLES and MISS HARDCASTLE

Sir Charles. What a situation am I in! If what you say appears, I shall then find a guilty son. If what he says be true, I shall then lose one that, of all others, I most wished for a daughter.

Miss Hard. I am proud of your approbation, and to show I merit it, if you place yourselves as I directed, you shall hear his explicit declaration. But he comes.

Sir Charles. I'll to your father, and keep him to the appointment. Exit SIR CHARLES.

Enter MARLOW

Marlow. Though prepared for setting out, I come once more to take leave; nor did I till this moment know the pain I feel in the separation.

Miss Hard. [In her own natural manner] I believe these sufferings cannot be very great, sir, which you can so easily remove. A day or two longer, perhaps, might lessen

your uneasiness, by showing the little value of what you think proper to regret.

Marlow. [*Aside*] This girl every moment improves upon me. [*To her*] It must not be, madam. I have already trifled too long with my heart. My very pride begins to submit to my passion. The disparity of education and fortune, the anger of a parent, and the contempt of my equals, begin to lose their weight; and nothing can restore me to myself but this painful effort of resolution.

Miss Hard. Then go, sir. I'll urge nothing more to detain you. Though my family be as good as hers you came down to visit, and my education, I hope, not inferior, what are these advantages without equal affluence? I must remain contented with the slight approbation of imputed merit; I must have only the mockery of your addresses, while all your serious aims are fixed on fortune.

Enter HARDCASTLE and SIR CHARLES from behind

Sir Charles. Here, behind this screen.

Hard. Ay, ay, make no noise. I'll engage my Kate covers him with confusion at last.

Marlow. By heavens, madam, fortune was ever my smallest consideration. Your beauty at first caught my eye; for who could see that without emotion? But every moment that I converse with you steals in some new grace, heightens the picture, and gives it stronger expression. What at first seemed rustic plainness now appears refined simplicity. What seemed forward assurance now strikes me as the result of courageous innocence and conscious virtue.

Sir Charles. What can it mean? He amazes me!

Hard. I told you how it would be. Hush!

Marlow. I am now determined to stay, madam, and I have too good an opinion of my father's discernment, when he sees you, to doubt his approbation.

Miss Hard. No, Mr. Marlow, I will not, cannot, detain you. Do you think I could suffer a connection in which there is the smallest room for repentance? Do you think I would take the mean advantage of a transient passion to load you with confusion? Do you think I could ever relish that happi-

ness which was acquired by lessening yours?

Marlow. By all that's good, I can have no happiness but what's in your power to grant me. Nor shall I ever feel repentance but in not having seen your merits before. I will stay, even contrary to your wishes; and though you should persist to shun me, I will make my respectful assiduities atone for the levity of my past conduct.

Miss Hard. Sir, I must entreat you'll desist. As our acquaintance began, so let it end, in indifference. I might have given an hour or two to levity; but seriously, Mr. Marlow, do you think I could ever submit to a connection where I must appear mercenary, and you imprudent? Do you think I could ever catch at the confident addresses of a secure admirer?

Marlow. [*Kneeling*] Does this look like security? Does this look like confidence? No, madam, every moment that shows me your merit, only serves to increase my diffidence and confusion. Here let me continue—

Sir Charles. I can hold it no longer. Charles, Charles, how hast thou deceived me! Is this your indifference, your uninteresting conversation!

Hard. Your cold contempt! your formal interview! What have you to say now?

Marlow. That I'm all amazement! What can it mean?

Hard. It means that you can say and unsay things at pleasure. That you can address a lady in private and deny it in public; that you have one story for us and another for my daughter!

Marlow. Daughter!—this lady your daughter?

Hard. Yes, sir, my only daughter. My Kate, whose else should she be?

Marlow. Oh, the devil.

Miss Hard. Yes, sir, that very identical, tall, squinting lady you were pleased to take me for. [*Curtseying*] She that you addressed as the mild, modest, sentimental man of gravity, and the bold, forward, agreeable Rattle of the Ladies' Club. Ha, ha, ha!

Marlow. Zounds, there's no bearing this; it's worse than death!

Miss Hard. In which of your characters, sir, will you give us leave to address you? As the faltering gentleman, with looks on the ground, that speaks just to be heard and

hates hypocrisy; or the loud, confident creature, that keeps it up with Mrs. Mantrap and old Miss Biddy Buckskin till three in the morning? Ha, ha, ha!

Marlow. Oh, curse on my noisy head. I never attempted to be impudent yet, that I was not taken down. I must be gone.

Hard. By the hand of my body, but you shall not. I see it was all a mistake, and I am rejoiced to find it. You shall not, sir, I tell you. I know she'll forgive you. Won't you forgive him, Kate? We'll all forgive you. Take courage, man. [*They retire, she tormenting him to the back scene*]

Enter MRS. HARDCASTLE and TONY

Mrs. Hard. So, so, they're gone off. Let them go, I care not.

Hard. Who gone?

Mrs. Hard. My dutiful niece and her gentleman, Mr. Hastings, from town—he who came down with our modest visitor here.

Sir Charles. Who, my honest George Hastings? As worthy a fellow as lives, and the girl could not have made a more prudent choice.

Hard. Then, by the hand of my body, I'm proud of the connection.

Mrs. Hard. Well, if he has taken away the lady, he has not taken her fortune; that remains in this family to console us for her loss.

Hard. Sure, Dorothy, you would not be so mercenary?

Mrs. Hard. Ay, that's my affair, not yours.

Hard. But you know if your son, when of age, refuses to marry his cousin, her whole fortune is then at her own disposal.

Mrs. Hard. Ay, but he's not of age, and she has not thought proper to wait for his refusal.

Enter HASTINGS and MISS NEVILLE

Mrs. Hard. [*Aside*] What! returned so soon? I begin not to like it.

Hastings. [*To Hardcastle*] For my late attempt to fly off with your niece, let my present confusion be my punishment. We are now come back to appeal from your justice to your humanity. By her father's consent I first paid her my addresses, and our passions were first founded in duty.

Miss Neville. Since his death I have been obliged to stoop to dissimulation to avoid oppression. In an hour of levity I was ready even to give up my fortune to secure my choice. But I'm now recovered from the delusion, and hope from your tenderness what is denied me from a nearer connection.

Mrs. Hard. Pshaw, pshaw! this is all but the whining end of a modern novel.

Hard. Be it what it will, I'm glad they're come back to reclaim their due. Come hither, Tony, boy. Do you refuse this lady's hand whom I now offer you?

Tony. What signifies my refusing? You know I can't refuse her till I'm of age, father.

Hard. While I thought concealing your age, boy, was likely to conduce to your improvement, I concurred with your mother's desire to keep it secret. But since I find she turns it to a wrong use, I must now declare you have been of age these three months.

Tony. Of age! Am I of age, father?

Hard. Above three months.

Tony. Then you'll see the first use I'll make of my liberty. [*Taking Miss Neville's hand*] Witness all men by these presents, that I, Anthony Lumpkin, Esquire, of BLANK place, refuse you, Constantia Neville, spinster, of no place at all, for my true and lawful wife. So Constance Neville may marry whom she pleases, and Tony Lumpkin is his own man again!

Sir Charles. O brave 'squire!

Hastings. My worthy friend!

Mrs. Hard. My undutiful offspring!

Marlow. Joy, my dear George! I give you joy sincerely. And could I prevail upon my little tyrant here to be less arbitrary, I should be the happiest man alive if you would return me the favor.

Hastings. [*To Miss Hardcastle*] Come, madam, you are now driven to the very last scene of all your contrivances. I know you like him, I'm sure he loves you, and you must and shall have him.

Hard. [*Joining their hands*] And I say so too. And Mr. Marlow, if she makes as good a wife as she has a daughter, I don't believe you'll ever repent your bargain. So now to supper! To-morrow we shall gather all the poor of the parish about us, and the Mistakes of the Night shall be crowned with a merry morning. So, boy, take her; as you

have been mistaken in the mistress, my wish is that you may never be mistaken in the wife.

EPILOGUE¹

WELL, having Stooped to Conquer with success,
And gained a husband without aid from dress,

Still as a barmaid, I could wish it too,
As I have conquered him to conquer you;
And let me say, for all your resolution,
That pretty barmaids have done execution.
Our life is all a play, composed to please;
"We have our exits and our entrances."²

The first act shows the simple country maid,
Harmless and young, of everything afraid;
Blushes when hired, and with unmeaning action,

"I hopes as how to give you satisfaction."
Her second act displays a livelier scene,—
Th' unblushing barmaid of a country inn,
Who whisks about the house, at market caters,

Talks loud, coquets the guests, and scolds the waiters.

Next the scene shifts to town, and there she soars,

The chop-house toast of ogling connoisseurs.
On 'squires and cits she there displays her arts,

And on the gridiron broils her lovers' hearts—
And as she smiles, her triumphs to complete,
Even Common Councilmen forget to eat.

The fourth act shows her wedded to the 'squire,

And madam now begins to hold it higher;
Pretends to taste, at operas cries "*Carol!*"³
And quits her *Nancy Dawson*,⁴ for *Che Faro*,⁵

Dotes upon dancing, and in all her pride
Swims round the room, the Heinel⁶ of Cheapside;

¹Spoken by Mrs. Bulkley, who played the part of Miss Hardcastle.

²*As You Like It*, II, vii. The remainder of the epilogue will be recognized as a variation on the speech of Jaques.

³*I. e.*, "fine," or "excellent."

⁴Popular song taking its name from a famous horri-pipe dancer.

⁵An air in Glück's *Orfeo*.

Ogles and leers with artificial skill,
Till having lost in age the power to kill,
She sits all night at cards, and ogles at spadille.⁷

Such, through our lives, the eventful history.
The fifth and last act still remains for me.
The barmaid now for your protection prays,
Turns female barrister, and pleads for Bayes.⁸

EPILOGUE⁹

TO BE SPOKEN IN THE CHARACTER
OF TONY LUMPKIN

By J. CRADDOCK, ESQ.

WELL—now all's ended, and my comrades gone,

Pray, what becomes of mother's nonly¹⁰ son?
A hopeful blade, in town I'll fix my station,
And try to make a bluster in the nation.

As for my cousin Neville, I renounce her;
Off—in a crack—I'll carry big Bet Bouncer.
Why should I not in the great world appear?

I soon shall have a thousand pounds a year.
No matter what a man may here inherit,
In London, gad, they've some regard to spirit.

I see the horses prancing up the streets,
And big Bet Bouncer bobs to all she meets,
Then hikes to jigs and pastimes ev'ry night—
Not to the play; they say it a'n't polite;
To Sadler's Wells,¹¹ perhaps, or operas go,
And once, by chance, to the roratorio.¹²
Thus here and there, for ever up and down,
We'll set the fashion, too, to half the town;
And then, at auctions—money ne'er regard;
Buy pictures like the great—ten pounds a yard.

Zounds! we shall make these London gentry say,
We know what's damned genteel as well as they.

⁹A famous dancer then in London.

⁷Ace of spades, the first trump in the game of Ombre.

⁸*I. e.*, for the dramatist.

⁹This came too late to be spoken. Joseph Craddock was a friend of Goldsmith's latter days. He translated a tragedy from the French of Voltaire.

¹⁰Only.

¹¹A pleasure-garden at Islington.

¹²Oratorio.

WILLIAM COWPER (1731-1800)

Cowper was born on 20 November, 1731. His father was the Reverend John Cowper, Rector of Great Berkhamstead and Chaplain to George II; his mother was Ann Donne Cowper, probably a descendant of the poet and divine, John Donne. When he was seven years old Cowper was sent to a school kept by a Dr. Pitman, but after two years he had to withdraw from the school on account of trouble with his eyes. Later, in 1741, he was sent to Westminster School, where he remained until 1748. Some of his school-fellows were George Colman, Robert Lloyd, Charles Churchill, R. Cumberland, Warren Hastings, and Elijah Impey. The first three of these were among his close friends, as was also one of the masters, Vincent Bourne. As late as 1781 Cowper wrote, "I love the memory of Vinny Bourne. I think him a better Latin poet than Tibullus, Propertius, Ausonius, or any of the writers in *his* way, except Ovid, and not at all inferior to *him*. . . . He was so good-natured, and so indolent, that I lost more than I got by him; for he made me as idle as himself. He was such a sloven, as if he had trusted to his genius as a cloak for everything that could disgust you in his person; and indeed in his writings he has almost made amends for all." Some months after he left Westminster Cowper was articled to a solicitor in London, where a fellow law-clerk was Edward Thurlow, later Lord Chancellor. Cowper says that while ostensibly studying the law he spent his days chiefly "in giggling and making giggle" with his two cousins, daughters of his uncle Ashley Cowper. With one of them, Theodora, he fell in love, but the girl's father would not permit an engagement. In 1752 Cowper went to live in the Middle Temple, and in 1754 he was called to the bar. He made no attempt, however, to practise the law, but lived rather aimlessly, doing some literary work and disporting himself with fellow-members of the Nonsense Club. In 1763 Cowper was nominated Clerk of the Journals of the House of Lords by his cousin Major Cowper, who had the disposal of the office. For some years Cowper had been more or less subject to melancholy, and evidently at this time his mind was unable to stand excitement. Owing to some dispute over his nomination to the clerkship it was necessary for Cowper to appear before the bar of the House of Lords, and the prospect of this ordeal was too much for him. He broke down, made several attempts at suicide, and finally became insane, so that he had to be removed by his brother to an asylum, where he remained until June, 1765. Cowper's attacks of melancholy were apparently connected with religious emotions and fears which gradually increased in strength, and his madness took the form of a conviction that he was eternally damned in punishment for some sin. By the summer of 1765 he had completely recovered his sanity, but through the remainder of his life he was subject to attacks of deep melancholy which several times brought temporary returns of insanity; and during his last six or seven years he scarcely ever emerged from the black terrors conjured up by his troubled mind. Cowper spent the rest of his life in quiet country villages, living first at Huntingdon, then at Olney, later at Weston, and finally with his cousin John Johnson at East Dereham in Norfolk, where he died on 25 April, 1800, and where he was buried. During the greater number of these years Cowper was surrounded by good friends, without whose society, encouragement, and help his poetry never would have been written and his life, in all probability, would have been a complete wreck. Chief among these were Mrs. Unwin, from whom he was never separated from 1765 until her death in 1796, and whom he would have married had it not been for his third attack of madness early in 1773; Lady Austen who first met him in 1781, who became strongly attached to him and probably wanted to marry him; and his cousin Lady Hesketh, sister of the Theodora Cowper whom he had loved in his youth.

After 1765 Cowper's mental health demanded that he have a settled occupation of some kind. The more busily he was occupied in some congenial pursuit the less was the danger of renewed insanity. Gardening served his turn, as did carpentry for a time, then drawing—he drew, he says, "many figures . . . which had, at least, the merit of being unparalleled by any production either of art or nature"—and finally poetry. He was turned to poetry by Mrs. Unwin, and he did some of his best work as the result of suggestions made by Lady Austen. He says himself, "I have no more right to the name of a poet than a maker of mouse-traps has to that of an engineer; but my little exploits in this way have at times amused me so much that I have often wished myself a good one. Such a talent in verse as mine is like a child's rattle—very entertaining to the trifle that uses it, and very disagreeable to all beside. But it has served to rid me of some melancholy moments, for I only take it up as a gentleman performer does his fiddle." And again, "Swift's darling motto was, *Vive la bagatelle*. . . . *La bagatelle* has no enemy in me, though it has neither so warm a friend nor so able a one as it had in him. If I trifle, and

merely trifle, it is because I am reduced to it by necessity—a melancholy, that nothing else so effectually disperses, engages me sometimes in the arduous task of being merry by force. And, strange as it may seem, the most ludicrous lines I ever wrote have been written in the saddest mood, and, but for that saddest mood, perhaps had never been written at all. To say truth, it would be but a shocking vagary, should the mariners on board a ship buffeted by a terrible storm employ themselves in fiddling and dancing; yet sometimes much such a part act I." Yet writing thus for amusement and distraction often on subjects that came to him from others, Cowper "finished, and polished, and touched, and retouched, with the utmost care." And it has been well said of him that "no truer poet . . . ever wrote the English language. He did greater things than he knew. . . . Neither fancy, nor learning, nor philosophy came between him and his object. His creed does occasionally; his sympathetic tenderness always. Otherwise it is the thing itself, river, tree, or hill, that he gives us in naked simplicity. That simplicity was the central element in his character, and it is the secret both of what he confessed and of what he discovered. The perfectly simple can ask questions and reveal facts which no one else can reveal or ask. So it was with Cowper. He takes up his pen to amuse himself, to describe his walks, and his friends, and his garden, and his pets, and in the result finds himself, as it were by accident, a great poet, and a poet of a new order. He, more than any one else, discovered that a man may be himself, and may tell the plain truth, and yet be a poet" (J. C. Bailey, Introduction to Cowper's *Poems*, pp. lvii–lviii).

THE TASK¹

BOOK I

THE SOFA

ARGUMENT OF THE FIRST BOOK.—Historical deduction of seats, from the stool to the Sofa—A School-boy's ramble—A walk in the country—The scene described—Rural sounds as well as sights delightful—Another walk—Mistake concerning the charms of solitude corrected—Colonnades commended—Alcove, and the view from it—The wilderness—The grove—The thresher—The necessity and the benefits of exercise—The works of nature superior to, and in some instances inimitable by, art—The wearisomeness of what is commonly called a life of pleasure—Change of scene sometimes expedient—A common described, and the character of crazy Kate introduced—Gypsies—The blessings of civilized life—That state most favorable to virtue—The South Sea islanders compassionated, but chiefly Omai—His present state of mind supposed—Civilized life friendly to virtue, but not great cities—Great cities, and London in particular, allowed their due praise, but censured—*Fête champêtre*—The book concludes with a reflection on the fatal effects of dissipation and effeminacy upon our public measures.

¹"The history of the following production is briefly this:—A lady, fond of blank verse, demanded a poem of that kind from the author, and gave him the *SOFA* for a subject. He obeyed; and, having much leisure, connected another subject with it; and, pursuing the train of thought to which his situation and turn of mind led him, brought forth at length, instead of the trifle which he at first intended, a serious affair—a Volume!" (Cowper's "Advertisement," prefixed to the first edition of *The Task*.) The lady was Lady

I SING the Sofa. I, who lately sang
Truth, Hope, and Charity,² and touched
with awe

The solemn chords, and with a trembling
hand,

Escaped with pain from that advent'rous
flight,

Now seek repose upon an humbler theme;

The theme though humble, yet august and
proud

Th' occasion—for the Fair commands the
song.

Time was, when clothing sumptuous or for
use,

Save their own painted skins, our sires had
none.

As yet black breeches were not; satin smooth,
Or velvet soft, or plush with shaggy pile:

The hardy chief upon the rugged rock

Washed by the sea, or on the gravelly bank

Thrown up by wintry torrents roaring loud,

Fearless of wrong, reposed his weary strength.

Those barb'rous ages past, succeeded next

The birth-day of invention; weak at first,

Dull in design, and clumsy to perform.

Joint-stools were then created; on three legs

Upright they stood. Three legs upholding
firm

A massy slab, in fashion square or round.

On such a stool immortal Alfred sat,

Austen, and Cowper began writing the poem probably in July, 1783. The complete poem, of which only the first book is here printed, consists of six books. It was published in 1785, in a volume containing also three shorter poems, one of which was *The Diverting History of John Gilpin*.

²Titles of three of the pieces in Cowper's first volume of poems, published in 1782.

And swayed the scepter of his infant realms:
 And such in ancient halls and mansions drear
 May still be seen; but perforated sore,
 And drilled in holes, the solid oak is found,
 By worms voracious eating through and
 * through.

At length a generation more refined
 Improved the simple plan; made three legs
 four,

Gave them a twisted form vermicular,
 And o'er the seat, with plenteous wadding
 stuffed,

Induced a splendid cover, green and blue,
 Yellow and red, of tap'stry richly wrought,
 And woven close, or needle-work sublime.
 There might ye see the peony spread wide,
 The full-blown rose, the shepherd and his
 lass,

Lap-dog and lambkin with black staring
 eyes,

And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.
 Now came the cane from India, smooth
 and bright

With nature's varnish; severed into stripes
 That interlaced each other, these supplied
 *Of texture firm a lattice-work, that braced
 The new machine, and it became a chair.
 But restless was the chair; the back erect
 Distressed the weary loins, that felt no ease;
 The slipp'ry seat betrayed the sliding part
 That pressed it, and the feet hung dangling
 down,

Anxious in vain to find the distant floor.
 These for the rich: the rest, whom fate had
 placed

In modest mediocrity, content
 With base materials, sat on well-tanned
 hides,

Obdurate and unyielding, glassy smooth,
 With here and there a tuft of crimson yarn,
 Or scarlet crevel,¹ in the cushion fixed;
 If cushion might be called, what harder
 seemed

Than the firm oak of which the frame was
 formed.

No want of timber then was felt or feared
 In Albion's happy isle. The lumber stood
 Pond'rous and fixed by its own massy weight.
 But elbows still were wanting; these, some
 say,

An alderman of Cripplegate contrived:
 And some ascribe th' invention to a priest

¹Worsted yarn slackly twisted or, as here, knotted.

Burly and big, and studious of his ease.
 But, rude at first, and not with easy slope
 Receding wide, they pressed against the ribs,
 And bruised the side; and, elevated high,
 Taught the raised shoulders to invade the
 ears.

Long time elapsed or e'er our rugged sires
 Complained, though incommodiously pent
 in,

And ill at ease behind. The ladies first
 'Gan murmur, as became the softer sex.
 Ingenious fancy, never better pleased
 Than when employed t' accommodate the
 fair,

Heard the sweet moan with pity, and devised
 The soft settee; one elbow at each end,
 And in the midst an elbow it received,
 United yet divided, twain at once.

So sit two kings of Brentford on one throne;
 And so two citizens who take the air,
 Close packed, and smiling, in a chaise and
 one.

But relaxation of the languid frame,
 By soft recumbency of outstretched limbs,
 Was bliss reserved for happier days. So
 slow

The growth of what is excellent; so hard
 T' attain perfection in this nether world.
 Thus first necessity invented stools,
 Convenience next suggested elbow-chairs,
 And luxury th' accomplished SOFA last.

The nurse sleeps sweetly, hired to watch
 the sick,
 Whom snoring she disturbs. As sweetly he,
 Who quits the coach-box at the midnight
 hour

To sleep within the carriage more secure,
 His legs depending at the open door.
 Sweet sleep enjoys the curate in his desk,
 The tedious rector drawling o'er his head;
 And sweet the clerk below. But neither
 sleep

Of lazy nurse, who snores the sick man dead,
 Nor his who quits the box at midnight hour
 To slumber in the carriage more secure,
 Nor sleep enjoyed by curate in his desk,
 Nor yet the dozings of the clerk, are sweet,
 Compared with the repose the SOFA yields.

Oh, may I live exempted (while I live
 Guiltless of pampered appetite obscene)
 From pangs arthritic that infest the toe
 Of libertine excess. The SOFA suits
 The gouty limb, 'tis true; but gouty limb,
 Though on a SOFA, may I never feel:

For I have loved the rural walk through lanes
Of grassy swarth, close cropped by nibbling
sheep,

And skirted thick with intertexture firm
Of thorny boughs; have loved the rural walk
O'er hills, through valleys, and by rivers'
brink,

E'er since a truant boy I passed my bounds
T' enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames;
And still remember, nor without regret
Of hours that sorrow since has much en-
deared,

How oft, my slice of pocket store consumed,
Still hung'ring, penniless and far from home,
I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws,
Or blushing crabs,¹ or berries, that emboss
The bramble, black as jet, or sloes² austere.
Hard fare! but such as boyish appetite
Disdains not; nor the palate, undepraved
By culinary arts, unsav'ry deems.

No Sofa then awaited my return;
Nor Sofa then I needed. Youth repairs
His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil
Incurring short fatigue; and, though our
years

As life declines speed rapidly away,
And not a year but pilfers as he goes
Some youthful grace that age would gladly
keep;

A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees
Their length and color from the locks they
spare;

Th' elastic spring of an unwearied foot
That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the
fence,

That play of lungs, inhaling and again
Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes
Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me,
Mine have not pilfered yet; nor yet impaired
My relish of fair prospect; scenes that
soothed

Or charmed me young, no longer young, I
find

Still soothing and of pow'r to charm me still.
And witness, dear companion of my walks,³
Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive
Fast locked in mine, with pleasure such as
love,

Confirmed by long experience of thy worth

¹Hip, ripened fruit of rosebush; haw, fruit of haw-
thorn; crab, crab-apple.

²Fruit of the blackthorn.

³Mrs. Unwin.

And well-tried virtues, could alone inspire—
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.

Thou know'st my praise of nature most
sincere,

And that my raptures are not conjured up
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
But genuine, and art partner of them all.

How oft upon yon eminence our pace
Has slackened to a pause, and we have borne
The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it
blew,

While admiration, feeding at the eye,
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.
Thence with what pleasure have we just
discerned

The distant plough slow moving, and beside
His lab'ring team, that swerved not from the
track,

The sturdy swain diminished to a boy!
Here Ouse, slow winding through a level
plain

Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,
Conducts the eye along its sinuous course
Delighted. There, fast rooted in his bank,
Stand, never overlooked, our fav'rite elms,
That screen the herdsman's solitary hut;
While far beyond, and overthwart the stream
That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale,
The sloping land recedes into the clouds;
Displaying on its varied side the grace
Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square
tow'r,

Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful
bells

Just undulates upon the list'ning ear,
Groves, heaths, and smoking villages remote.
Scenes must be beautiful, which, daily
viewed,

Please daily, and whose novelty survives
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years.
Praise justly due to those that I describe.⁴

Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds,
Exhilarate the spirit; and restore
The tone of languid nature. Mighty winds,
That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading
wood

Of ancient growth, make music not unlike
The dash of ocean on his winding shore,
And lull the spirit while they fill the mind;
Unnumbered branches waving in the blast,
And all their leaves fast flutt'ring, all at
once.

⁴The scenes described are those encountered in a
walk from Olney to Weston.

Nor less composure waits upon the roar
Of distant floods, or on the softer voice
Of neighb'ring fountain, or of rills that slip
Through the cleft rock, and, chiming as they
fall

Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length
In matted grass, that with a livelier green
Betrays the secret of their silent course.
Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds,
But animated nature sweeter still,
To soothe and satisfy the human ear.
Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and
one

The livelong night: nor these alone, whose
notes

Nice fingered art must emulate in vain,
But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sub-
lime

In still repeated circles, screaming loud,
The jay, the pie,¹ and e'en the boding owl
That hails the rising moon, have charms for
me.

Sounds inharmonious in themselves and
harsh,

Yet heard in scenes where peace for ever
reigns,

And only there, please highly for their sake.

Peace to the artist, whose ingenious
thought

Devised the weather-house,² that useful toy!
Fearless of humid air and gathering rains,
Forth steps the man—an emblem of myself!
More delicate, his tim'rous mate retires.
When Winter soaks the fields, and female feet,
Too weak to struggle with tenacious clay,
Or ford the rivulets, are best at home,
The task of new discov'ries falls on me.
At such a season, and with such a charge,
Once went I forth; and found, till then un-
known,

A cottage, whither oft we since repair:
'Tis perched upon the green-hill top, but
close

Environed with a ring of branching elms
That overhang the thatch, itself unseen,
Peeps at the vale below; so thick beset
With foliage of such dark redundant growth,
I called the low-roofed lodge the *peasant's*
nest.

¹Magpie.

²A substitute for the barometer, still occasionally to
be seen. It is so contrived that the figure of a man
comes forward when bad weather is to be expected,
and that of a woman when good.

And, hidden as it is, and far remote
From such unpleasing sounds as haunt the
ear

In village or in town, the bay of curs
Incessant, clinking hammers, grinding
wheels,

And infants clam'rous whether pleased or
pained,

Oft have I wished the peaceful covert mine.
Here, I have said, at least I should possess
The poet's treasure, silence, and indulge
The dreams of fancy, tranquil and secure.
Vain thought! the dweller in that still retreat
Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.

Its elevated site forbids the wretch
To drink sweet waters of the crystal well;
He dips his bowl into the weedy ditch,
And, heavy-laden, brings his bev'rage home,
Far-fetched and little worth; nor seldom
waits,

Dependent on the baker's punctual call,
To hear his creaking panniers at the door,
Angry and sad, and his last crust consumed.

So farewell envy of the *peasant's nest*!

If solitude make scant the means of life,
Society for me!—thou seeming sweet,

Be still a pleasing object in my view;
My visit still, but never mine abode.

Not distant far, a length of colonnade
Invites us: monument of ancient taste,
Now scorned, but worthy of a better fate.
Our fathers knew the value of a screen
From sultry suns; and, in their shaded walks
And long protracted bow'rs, enjoyed at noon
The gloom and coolness of declining day.
We bear our shades about us; self-deprived
Of other screen, the thin umbrella spread,
And range an Indian waste without a tree.
Thanks to Benevolus³—he spares me yet
These chestnuts ranged in corresponding
lines;

And, though himself so polished, still re-
prieves

The obsolete prolixity of shade.

Descending now (but cautious, lest too
fast)

A sudden steep, upon a rustic bridge
We pass a gulf, in which the willows dip
Their pendent boughs, stooping as if to
drink.

Hence, ankle-deep in moss and flow'ry
thyme,

³John Courtney Throckmorton, Esq., of Weston
Underwood (Cowper).

We mount again, and feel at ev'ry step
 Our foot half sunk in hillocks green and soft,
 Raised by the mole, the miner of the soil.
 He, not unlike the great ones of mankind,
 Disfigures earth; and, plotting in the dark,
 Toils much to earn a monumental pile,
 That may record the mischiefs he has done.

The summit gained, behold the proud
 alcove

That crowns it! yet not all its pride secures
 The grand retreat from injuries impressed
 By rural carvers, who with knives deface
 The pannels, leaving an obscure, rude name,
 In characters uncouth, and spelled amiss.
 So strong the zeal t' immortalize himself
 Beats in the breast of man, that e'en a few,
 Few transient years, won from th' abyss
 abhorred

Of blank oblivion, seem a glorious prize,
 And even to a clown. Now roves the eye;
 And, posted on this speculative height,
 Exults in its command. The sheepfold here
 Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe.¹
 At first, progressive as a stream, they seek
 The middle field; but, scattered by degrees,
 Each to his choice, soon whiten all the land.
 There from the sunburned hay-field home-
 ward creeps

The loaded wain, while, lightened of its
 charge,
 The wain that meets it passes swiftly by,
 The boorish driver leaning o'er his team
 Vociferous, and impatient of delay.
 Nor less attractive is the woodland scene,
 Diversified with trees of ev'ry growth,
 Alike, yet various. Here the gray smooth
 trunks

Of ash, or lime, or beech, distinctly shine,
 Within the twilight of their distant shades;
 There, lost behind a rising ground, the wood
 Seems sunk, and shortened to its topmost
 boughs.

No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
 Though each its hue peculiar; paler some,
 And of a wannish gray; the willow such,
 And poplar, that with silver lines his leaf,
 And ash far-stretching his umbrageous arm;
 Of deeper green the elm; and deeper still,
 Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak.
 Some glossy-leaved, and shining in the sun,
 The maple, and the beech of oily nuts
 Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve

Diffusing odors: nor unnoted pass
 The sycamore, capricious in attire,
 Now green, now tawny, and, ere autumn
 yet

Have changed the woods, in scarlet honors
 bright.

O'er these, but far beyond (a spacious map
 Of hill and valley interposed between),
 The Ouse, dividing the well-watered land,
 Now glitters in the sun, and now retires,
 As bashful, yet impatient to be seen.

Hence the declivity is sharp and short,
 And such the re-ascent; between them weeps
 A little naiad her improv'ished urn
 All summer long, which winter fills again.
 The folded gates would bar my progress now,
 But that the lord² of this enclosed demesne,
 Communicative of the good he owns,
 Admits me to a share; the guiltless eye
 Commits no wrong, nor wastes what it enjoys.
 Refreshing change! where now the blazing
 sun?

By short transition we have lost his glare,
 And stepped at once into a cooler clime.
 Ye fallen avenues! once more I mourn
 Your fate unmerited, once more rejoice
 That yet a remnant of your race survives.
 How airy and how light the graceful arch,
 Yet awful as the consecrated roof
 Re-echoing pious anthems! while beneath
 The checkered earth seems restless as a flood
 Brushed by the wind. So sportive is the
 light

Shot through the boughs, it dances as they
 dance,
 Shadow and sunshine intermingling quick,
 And dark'ning and enlight'ning, as the leaves
 Play wanton, ev'ry moment, ev'ry spot.

And now, with nerves new-braced and
 spirits cheered,
 We tread the wilderness, whose well-rolled
 walks,

With curvature of slow and easy sweep—
 Deception innocent—give ample space
 To narrow bounds. The grove receives us
 next;

Between the upright shafts of whose tall
 elms

We may discern the thresher at his task.
 Thump after thump resounds the constant
 flail,

That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls

¹Field.

²Named in the last note but one.

Full on the destined ear. Wide flies the chaff;

The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist
Of atoms, sparkling in the noon-day beam.
Come hither, ye that press your beds of down

And sleep not: see him sweating o'er his bread

Before he eats it.—'Tis the primal curse,
But softened into mercy; made the pledge
Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.

By ceaseless action all that is subsists.
Constant rotation of th' unwearied wheel
That nature rides upon maintains her health,
Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads
An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves.

Its own revolvency upholds the world.
Winds from all quarters agitate the air,
And fit the limpid element for use,
Else noxious: oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams,
All feel the fresh'ning impulse, and are cleansed

By restless undulation: e'en the oak
Thrives by the rude concussion of the storm:
He seems indeed indignant, and to feel
Th' impression of the blast with proud disdain,

Frowning as if in his unconscious arm
He held the thunder: but the monarch owes
His firm stability to what he scorns—
More fixed below, the more disturbed above.
The law, by which all creatures else are bound,

Binds man the lord of all. Himself derives
No mean advantage from a kindred cause,
From strenuous toil his hours of sweetest ease.

The sedentary stretch their lazy length
When custom bids, but no refreshment find,
For none they need: the languid eye, the cheek

Deserted of its bloom, the flaccid, shrunk,
And withered muscle, and the vapid soul,
Reproach their owner with that love of rest
To which he forfeits e'en the rest he loves.
Not such th' alert and active. Measure life

By its true worth, the comforts it affords,
And theirs alone seems worthy of the name.
Good health and, its associate in most,
Good temper; spirits prompt to undertake,

And not soon spent, though in an arduous task;

The pow'rs of fancy and strong thought are theirs;

E'en age itself seems privileged in them
With clear exemption from its own defects.
A sparkling eye beneath a wrinkled front
The vet'ran shows, and, gracing a gray beard
With youthful smiles, descends toward the grave

Sprightly, and old almost without decay.

Like a coy maiden, ease, when courted most,

Farthest retires—an idol, at whose shrine
Who oft'nest sacrifice are favored least.
The love of nature, and the scene she draws,
Is nature's dictate. Strange, there should be found,

Who, self-imprisoned in their proud saloons,
Renounce the odors of the open field
For the unscented fictions of the loom;
Who, satisfied with only penciled scenes,
Prefer to the performance of a God
Th' inferior wonders of an artist's hand!
Lovely indeed the mimic works of art;
But nature's works far lovelier. I admire—
None more admires—the painter's magic skill,

Who shows me that which I shall never see,
Conveys a distant country into mine,
And throws Italian light on English walls:
But imitative strokes can do no more
Than please the eye—sweet nature ev'ry sense.

The air salubrious of her lofty hills,
The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales,
And music of her woods—no works of man
May rival these; these all bespeak a pow'r
Peculiar, and exclusively her own.
Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast;
'Tis free to all—'tis ev'ry day renewed;
Who scorns it starves deservedly at home.
He does not scorn it, who, imprisoned long
In some unwholesome dungeon, and a prey
To sallow sickness, which the vapors, dank
And clammy, of his dark abode have bred,
Escapes at last to liberty and light:
His cheek recovers soon its healthful hue,
His eye relumines its extinguished fires,
He walks, he leaps, he runs—is winged with joy,

And riots in the sweets of ev'ry breeze.
He does not scorn it, who has long endured
A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs.

Nor yet the mariner, his blood inflamed
 With acrid salts; his very heart athirst
 To gaze at nature in her green array,
 Upon the ship's tall side he stands, possessed
 With visions prompted by intense desire:
 Fair fields appear below, such as he left,
 Far distant, such as he would die to find—
 He seeks them headlong, and is seen no more.

The spleen is seldom felt where Flora¹
 reigns;

The low'ring eye, the petulance, the frown,
 And sullen sadness, that o'ershade, distort,
 And mar the face of beauty, when no cause
 For such immeasurable woe appears,
 These Flora banishes, and gives the fair
 Sweet smiles, and bloom less transient than
 her own.

It is the constant revolution, stale
 And tasteless, of the same repeated joys,
 That falls and satiates, and makes languid
 life

A peddler's pack, that bows the bearer down.
 Health suffers, and the spirits ebb; the heart
 Recoils from its own choice—at the full feast
 Is famished—finds no music in the song,
 No smartness in the jest; and wonders why.
 Yet thousands still desire to journey on,
 Though halt, and weary of the path they
 tread.

The paralytic, who can hold her cards,
 But cannot play them, borrows a friend's
 hand

To deal and shuffle, to divide and sort,
 Her mingled suits and sequences; and sits,
 Spectatress both and spectacle, a sad
 And silent cipher, while her proxy plays.
 Others are dragged into the crowded room
 Between supporters; and, once seated, sit,
 Through downright inability to rise,
 Till the stout bearers lift the corpse again.
 These speak a loud memento. Yet e'en these
 Themselves love life, and cling to it, as he
 That overhangs a torrent to a twig.
 They love it, and yet loathe it; fear to die,
 Yet scorn the purposes for which they live.
 Then wherefore not renounce them? No—
 the dread,

The slavish dread of solitude, that breeds
 Reflection and remorse, the fear of shame,
 And their invet'rate habits, all forbid.

Whom call we gay? That honor has been
 long

The boast of mere pretenders to the name.
 The innocent are gay—the lark is gay,
 That dries his feathers, saturate with dew,
 Beneath the rosy cloud, while yet the beams
 Of day-spring overshoot his humble nest.
 The peasant too, a witness of his song,
 Himself a songster, is as gay as he.
 But save me from the gayety of those
 Whose headaches nail them to a noonday
 bed:

And save me too from theirs whose haggard
 eyes

Flash desperation, and betray their pangs
 For property stripped off by cruel chance;
 From gayety that fills the bones with pain,
 The mouth with blasphemy, the heart with
 woe.

The earth was made so various, that the
 mind

Of desultory man, studious of change,
 And pleased with novelty, might be indulged.
 Prospects, however lovely, may be seen
 Till half their beauties fade; the weary sight,
 Too well acquainted with their smiles, slides
 off,

Fastidious, seeking less familiar scenes.
 Then snug enclosures in the sheltered vale,
 Where frequent hedges intercept the eye,
 Delight us; happy to renounce awhile,
 Not senseless of its charms, what still we
 love,

That such short absence may endear it more.
 Then forests, or the savage rock, may please,
 That hides the sea-mew in his hollow clefts
 Above the reach of man: his hoary head,
 Conspicuous many a league, the mariner
 Bound homeward, and in hope already there,
 Greets with three cheers exulting. At his
 waist

A girdle of half-withered shrubs he shows,
 And at his feet the baffled billows die.
 The common, overgrown with fern, and
 rough
 With prickly gorse, that, shapeless and de-
 formed,
 And dang'rous to the touch, has yet its
 bloom,

And decks itself with ornaments of gold,
 Yields no unpleasing ramble; there the turf
 Smells fresh, and, rich in odorif'rous herbs
 And fungous fruits of earth, regales the sense
 With luxury of unexpected sweets.

There often wanders one, whom better
 days

¹Goddess of flowers.

Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimmed
With lace, and hat with splendid riband
bound.

A serving maid was she, and fell in love
With one who left her, went to sea, and died.
Her fancy followed him through foaming
waves

To distant shores; and she would sit and
weep

At what a sailor suffers; fancy, too,
Delusive most where warmest wishes are,
Would oft anticipate his glad return,
And dream of transports she was not to
know.

She heard the doleful tidings of his death—
And never smiled again. And now she
roams

The dreary waste; there spends the livelong
day,

And there, unless when charity forbids,
The livelong night. A tattered apron hides,
Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides, a gown
More tattered still; and both but ill conceal
A bosom heaved with never-ceasing sighs.

She begs an idle pin of all she meets,
And hoards them in her sleeve; but needful
food,

Though pressed with hunger oft, or comelier
clothes,

Though pinched with cold, asks never.—
Kate is crazed.

I see a column of slow-rising smoke
O'ertop the lofty wood that skirts the wild.
A vagabond and useless tribe there eat
Their miserable meal. A kettle, slung
Between two poles upon a stick transverse,
Receives the morsel—flesh obscene of dog,
Or vermin, or, at best, of cock purloined
From his accustomed perch. Hard-faring
race!

They pick their fuel out of ev'ry hedge,
Which, kindled with dry leaves, just saves
unquenched

The spark of life. The sportive wind blows
wide

Their flutt'ring rags, and shows a tawny skin,
The vellum of the pedigree they claim.

Great skill have they in palmistry, and more
To conjure clean away the gold they touch,
Conveying worthless dross into its place;
Loud when they beg, dumb only when they
steal.

Strange, that a creature rational, and cast
In human mold, should brutalize by choice

His nature; and, though capable of arts
By which the world might profit, and himself,
Self-banished from society, prefer
Such squalid sloth to honorable toil!
Yet even these, though, feigning sickness
oft,

They swathe the forehead, drag the limping
limb,

And vex their flesh with artificial sores,
Can change their whine into a mirthful note
When safe occasion offers; and with dance,
And music of the bladder and the bag,
Beguile their woes, and make the woods
resound.

Such health and gayety of heart enjoy
The houseless rovers of the sylvan world;
And, breathing wholesome air and wand'ring
much,

Need other physic none to heal th' effects
Of loathsome diet, penury, and cold.

Bless'd he, though undistinguished from
the crowd

By wealth or dignity, who dwells secure,
Where man, by nature fierce, has laid aside
His fierceness, having learned, though slow
to learn,

The manners and the arts of civil life.
His wants, indeed, are many; but supply
Is obvious, placed within the easy reach
Of temp'rate wishes and industrious hands.
Here virtue thrives as in her proper soil;
Not rude and surly, and beset with thorns,
And terrible to sight, as when she springs
(If e'er she spring spontaneous) in remote
And barb'rous climes, where violence pre-
vails,

And strength is lord of all; but gentle, kind,
By culture tamed, by liberty refreshed,
And all her fruits by radiant truth matured.
War and the chase engross the savage whole:
War followed for revenge, or to supplant
The envied tenants of some happier spot;
The chase for sustenance, precarious trust!
His hard condition with severe constraint
Binds all his faculties, forbids all growth
Of wisdom, proves a school in which he learns
Sly circumvention, unrelenting hate,
Mean self-attachment, and scarce aught
beside.

Thus fare the shiv'ring natives of the north,
And thus the rangers of the western world,
Where it advances far into the deep,
Towards th' antarctic. E'en the favored
isles

So lately found,¹ although the constant sun
 Cheer all their seasons with a grateful smile,
 Can boast but little virtue; and, inert
 Through plenty, lose in morals what they
 gain

In manners—victims of luxurious ease.
 These therefore I can pity, placed remote
 From all that science traces, art invents,
 Or inspiration teaches; and enclosed
 In boundless oceans, never to be passed
 By navigators uninformed as they,
 Or ploughed perhaps by British bark again.
 But, far beyond the rest, and with most
 cause,

Thee, gentle savage!² whom no love of thee
 Or thine, but curiosity perhaps,
 Or else vainglory, prompted us to draw
 Forth from thy native bow'rs, to show thee
 here

With what superior skill we can abuse
 The gifts of providence, and squander life.
 The dream is past; and thou hast found
 again

Thy cocoas and bananas, palms and yams,
 And homestall thatched with leaves. But
 hast thou found

Their former charms? And, having seen our
 state,

Our palaces, our ladies, and our pomp
 Of equipage, our gardens, and our sports,
 And heard our music; are thy simple friends,
 Thy simple fare, and all thy plain delights
 As dear to thee as once? And have thy joys
 Lost nothing by comparison with ours?
 Rude as thou art (for we returned thee rude
 And ignorant, except of outward show),
 I cannot think thee yet so dull of heart
 And spiritless, as never to regret
 Sweets tasted here, and left as soon as
 known.

Methinks I see thee straying on the beach,
 And asking of the surge that bathes thy foot
 If ever it has washed our distant shore.
 I see thee weep, and thine are honest tears,
 A patriot's for his country: thou art sad
 At thought of her forlorn and abject state,

¹The Society and Friendly Islands.

²Omai, a native of Otaheite (Friendly Islands), who was brought to England in 1774. He was received by George III, and aroused wide interest in England. Dr. Johnson "was struck with the elegance of his behavior," and Sir Joshua Reynolds painted him. Cowper's guess that he pined for the refinements of England after his return to his native island was correct.

From which no pow'r of thine can raise her
 up.

Thus fancy paints thee, and, though apt to
 err,

Perhaps errs little when she paints thee thus.
 She tells me, too, that duly ev'ry morn
 Thou climb'st the mountain top, with eager
 eye

Exploring far and wide the wat'ry waste
 For sight of ship from England. Ev'ry
 speck

Seen in the dim horizon turns thee pale
 With conflict of contending hopes and fears.
 But comes at last the dull and dusky eve,
 And sends thee to th' cabin, well-prepared
 To dream all night of what the day denied.
 Alas! expect it not: We found no bait
 To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,
 Disinterested good, is not our trade.

We travel far, 'tis true, but not for nought;
 And must be bribed to compass earth again
 By other hopes and richer fruits than yours.

But, though true worth and virtue in the
 mild

And genial soil of cultivated life
 Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only
 there,

Yet not in cities oft: in proud and gay
 And gain-devoted cities. Thither flow,
 As to a common and most noisome sew'r,
 The dregs and feculence of ev'ry land.
 In cities foul example on most minds
 Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds
 In gross and pampered cities sloth and lust,
 And wantonness and gluttonous excess.
 In cities vice is hidden with most ease,
 Or seen with least reproach; and virtue,
 taught

By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph
 there

Beyond th' achievement of successful flight.
 I do confess them nurs'ries of the arts,
 In which they flourish most; where, in the
 beams

Of warm encouragement, and in the eye
 Of public note, they reach their perfect
 size.

Such London is, by taste and wealth pro-
 claimed

The fairest capital of all the world,
 By riot and incontinence the worst.
 There, touched by Reynolds, a dull blank
 becomes

A lucid mirror, in which nature sees

All her reflected features. Bacon¹ there
 Gives more than female beauty to a stone,
 And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.
 Nor does the chisel occupy alone
 The pow'rs of sculpture, but the style as
 much;
 Each province of her art her equal care.
 With nice incision of her guided steel
 She ploughs a brazen field, and clothes a soil
 So sterile with what charms soe'er she will,
 The richest scen'ry and the loveliest forms.
 Where finds philosophy her eagle eye,
 With which she gazes at yon burning disk
 Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots?
 In London. Where her implements exact,
 With which she calculates, computes, and
 scans,
 All distance, motion, magnitude, and now
 Measures an atom, and now girds a world?
 In London. Where has commerce such a
 mart,
 So rich, so thronged, so drained, and so sup-
 plied,
 As London—opulent, enlarged, and still
 Increasing London? Babylon of old
 Not more the glory of the earth than she,
 A more accomplished world's chief glory
 now.
 She has her praise. Now mark a spot or
 two,
 That so much beauty would do well to purge;
 And show this queen of cities that so fair
 May yet be foul; so witty, yet not wise.
 It is not seemly, nor of good report,
 That she is slack in discipline; more prompt
 T' avenge than to prevent the breach of
 law:
 That she is rigid in denouncing death
 On petty robbers, and indulges life
 And liberty, and oft-times honor too,
 To speculators of the public gold:
 That thieves at home must hang, but he
 that puts
 Into his overgorged and bloated purse

¹ John Bacon (1740-1799), a sculptor. Among his works are monuments of Chatham in the Guildhall and in Westminster Abbey. Bacon liked Cowper's first volume of poems and sent him a print of his monument of Chatham.

The wealth of Indian provinces escapes.²
 Nor is it well, nor can it come to good,
 That, through profane and infidel contempt
 Of holy writ, she has presumed t' annul
 And abrogate, as roundly as she may,
 The total ordinance and will of God;
 Advancing fashion to the post of truth,
 And cent'ring all authority in modes
 And customs of her own, till sabbath rites
 Have dwindled into unrespected forms,
 And knees and hassocks are well-nigh di-
 vorced.

God made the country, and man made the
 town.

What wonder then that health and virtue,
 gifts

That can alone make sweet the bitter
 draught

That life holds out to all, should most abound
 And least be threatened in the fields and
 groves?

Possess ye, therefore, ye who, borne about
 In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue
 But that of idleness, and taste no scenes
 But such as art contrives, possess ye still
 Your element; there only can ye shine,
 There only minds like yours can do no harm.
 Our groves were planted to console at noon
 The pensive wand'rer in their shades. At
 eve

The moonbeam, sliding softly in between
 The sleeping leaves, is all the light they
 wish,

Birds warbling all the music. We can spare
 The splendor of your lamps; they but eclipse
 Our softer satellite. Your songs confound
 Our more harmonious notes: the thrush de-
 parts

Scared, and th' offended nightingale is mute.
 There is a public mischief in your mirth;
 It plagues your country. Folly such as
 yours,

Graced with a sword, and worthier of a fan,
 Has made, which enemies could ne'er have
 done,

Our arch of empire, steadfast but for you,
 A mutilated structure, soon to fall.

²A thrust at Clive.

ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE OUT OF NORFOLK¹

THE GIFT OF MY COUSIN ANN BODHAM

OH, THAT those lips had language! Life has
passed

With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smiles
I see,

The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
Voice only fails, else, how distinct they say,
"Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears
away!"

The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Bless'd be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles time's tyrannic claim
To quench it) here shines on me still the
same.

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
O welcome guest, though unexpected here!
Who bidd'st me honor with an artless
song,

Affectionate, a mother lost so long,
I will obey, not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own;
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief—
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream, that thou art she.

My mother! when I learned that thou
wast dead,

Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unfelt,² a
kiss;

Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Ah, that maternal smile! it answers—Yes.
I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nurs'ry window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!

¹Written in February, 1790; published, without Cowper's knowledge or consent, in a small volume or pamphlet together with *The Dog and the Water Lily* in 1798. Anne Donne Bodham was the daughter of Roger Donne, the brother of Cowper's mother, and the wife of the Rev. Thomas Bodham. Cowper's mother died on 12 November, 1737.

²Some editions print "unseen." This is the first of several important variations between the text of 1798 and that of 1808 and later editions. Here and throughout the later readings have been adopted.

But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art
gone

Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting word shall pass my lips no more!
Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my
concern,

Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
What ardently I wished I long believed,
And, disappointed still, was still deceived;
By expectation every day beguiled,
Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went.
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
I learned at last submission to my lot;
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard
no more,

Children not thine have trod my nurs'ry
floor;

And where the gard'ner Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrap-
ped

In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capped,
'Tis now become a history little known,
That once we called the past'ral house³ our
own.

Short-lived possession! but the record fair
That mem'ry keeps of all thy kindness there,
Still outlives many a storm that has effaced
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou might'st know me safe and
warmly laid;

Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biscuit, or confectionary plum;
The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestowed
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and
glowed;

All this, and more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no
fall,

Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and
brakes

That humor⁴ interposed too often makes;
All this still legible in mem'ry's page,
And still to be so, to my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
Such honors to thee as my numbers may;

³The rectory of Great Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire, where Cowper was born.

⁴*I. e.*, caprice.

Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
Not scorned in heav'n, though little noticed
here.

Could time, his flight reversed, restore the
hours,
When, playing with thy vesture's tissued
flow'rs,

The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
I pricked them into paper with a pin
(And thou wast happier than myself the
while,

Would'st softly speak, and stroke my head
and smile),

Could those few pleasant days again appear,
Might one wish bring them, would I wish
them here?

I would not trust my heart—the dear delight
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.—
But no—what here we call our life is such,
So little to be loved, and thou so much,
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's
coast

(The storms all weathered and the ocean
crossed)

*Shoots into port at some well-havened isle,
Where spices breathe and brighter seasons
smile,

There sits quiescent on the floods that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay;
So thou, with sails how swift! hast reached
the shore

"Where tempests never beat nor billows
roar,"¹

And thy loved consort on the dang'rous tide
Of life long since² has anchored by thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
Always from port withheld, always dis-
tressed—

Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-
tossed,

Sails ripped, seams op'ning wide, and com-
pass lost,

And day by day some current's thwarting
force

Sets me more distant from a prosp'rous
course.

¹Inexactly quoted from Garth's *Dispensary*, III, 226. It should be, "Where billows never break, nor tempests roar."

²Cowper's father died in 1756.

Yet, oh, the thought that thou art safe, and
he!

That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
My boast is not that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the
earth,³

But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
The son of parents passed into the skies.

And now, farewell. Time unrevoked has
run

His wonted course, yet what I wished is
done.

By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem t' have lived my childhood o'er again;
To have renewed the joys that once were
mine,

Without the sin of violating thine:

And, while the wings of fancy still are free,

And I can view this mimic show of thee,

Time has but half succeeded in his theft—

Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me
left.

TO MARY⁴

THE twentieth year is well-nigh past

Since first our sky was overcast;

Ah, would that this might be the last,

My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,

I see thee daily weaker grow;

'Twas my distress that brought thee low,

My Mary!

Thy needles, once a shining store,

For my sake restless heretofore,

Now rust disused and shine no more,

My Mary!

For though thou gladly wouldst fulfill

The same kind office for me still,

Thy sight now seconds not thy will,

My Mary!

³Cowper's mother was descended by four different lines from Henry III.

⁴Written in the fall of 1793; the last poem Cowper wrote at Weston. Published in 1803, with the exception of the tenth stanza, which was first printed in 1900. The poem is addressed to Mrs. Unwin, and the reference in the first line is to 1773, when Cowper's engagement to her was broken off because of a return of his madness.

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827)

William Blake was born on 28 November, 1757, in London, where his father, James Blake, kept a hosier's shop. He received an elementary education, but the circumstances of his family made it necessary that he should early learn some trade. His father, perceiving that the boy's tastes ran in that direction, sent him at the age of ten to a teacher of drawing. Four years later he apprenticed him to the engraver Basire, with whom Blake remained until he was twenty. Then for a short time he was a member of the antique class of the Royal Academy, after which he set up as an engraver on his own account. The course of Blake's life was outwardly uneventful. In August, 1782, he married Catherine Boucher, the daughter of a Richmond market-gardener. She was entirely uneducated—when she married she could not even read or write—but she proved a true helpmate to Blake, sustaining him with unshaken devotion throughout his life, and enabling him, despite their poverty, to do his own unrewarded work as artist and poet. In 1800 William Hayley was at work on a biography of his friend the poet Cowper, and he invited Blake to engrave the illustrations of this work. Blake accepted the invitation, and he and his wife removed from London to Felpham, and lived in the country near Hayley for several years. Save for this period, however, Blake's life was passed in London, where he worked in obscurity until his death on 12 August, 1827. His small earnings came chiefly from his work as an engraver, though he had a few friends who purchased his drawings and paintings. Among his more notable achievements were his series of designs for Young's *Night Thoughts*, for Blair's *Grave*, for the Book of Job, for Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and the recently discovered designs for Gray's poems. Blake was, however, a poet as well as an artist, and to this fact we owe the existence of a series of books unique in the history of literature. For all of his poems save those in his earliest volume (*Poetical Sketches*, 1783) he himself published—if "publishing" it can be called. He inscribed the text of his poems, together with accompanying decorative designs, upon metal plates, to which he then applied acid which ate away the remaining surface. He thus obtained plates, similar in character to modern stereotype plates, from which he printed in the color which was to form the groundwork of the resulting page, and these pages were then tinted by hand, either by himself or by his wife. Thus Blake literally made his own books, and they were singularly beautiful. The process was, of course, both slow and expensive, and buyers were few, so that only a few copies of each of his books were made—copies which have become almost priceless. In this way were produced the two series of lyrics on which Blake's reputation as a poet now chiefly rests, *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and *Songs of Experience* (1794), as well as the longer poems, prophetic books, as he called them, in which he more directly expounded his peculiar system of thought in a symbolic language which is so much his own creation as to remain almost unintelligible.

Fortunately one does not need to understand Blake's intricate and obscure symbolism in order to appreciate his shorter lyrics. Yet one should realize that Blake was a confident rebel against all the conventions of organized society. Quiet and blameless as was his outward life, still, in theory he permitted no concessions which might impair complete freedom of thought and action. In the name of freedom he made war alike upon civil law and the rational intellect, believing that the natural impulses of the human heart would lead us to better lives than external compulsion, and that the imagination is a surer guide to truth than reason or common sense. Blake was so confident of the truth of his intuitions that they took on sensible form and appeared to him as visions from the eternal, spiritual world from which, as he believed, we are more or less cut off by earthly life. "I assert, for myself, that I do not behold the outward creation, and that to me it is hindrance and not action. 'What!' it will be questioned, 'when the sun rises, do you not see a round disk of fire somewhat like a guinea?' Oh! no, no! I see an innumerable company of the heavenly host crying, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty!' I question not my corporeal eye any more than I would question a window concerning a sight. I look through it, and not with it." Much of Blake's thought, no doubt, is the fruit, developing in an unusually positive personality, of his early acquaintance with the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg and of ideas imbibed in the days when he was associating, in the rooms of the bookseller Johnson, with Tom Paine and others sympathetic to the French Revolution. Blake became, indeed, the embodiment of practically everything that was contradictory to the spirit of the eighteenth century, and so foreshadowed much that was to be characteristic of the romantic movement. As the champion of the imagination against the reason he exclaimed, "To generalize is to be an idiot. To particularize is the great distinction of merit." And again he asserted, "Mere enthusiasm is the all in all." It is little wonder that among those who did not know him personally he passed for a madman.

TO WINTER¹

"O WINTER! bar thine adamantine doors:
The north is thine; there hast thou built thy
dark
Deep-founded habitation. Shake not thy
roofs,
Nor bend thy pillars with thine iron car."

He hears me not, but o'er the yawning deep
Rides heavy; his storms are unchained,
sheathéd

In ribbéd steel; I dare not lift mine eyes,
For he hath reared his scepter o'er the world.

Lo! now the direful monster, whose skin
clings
To his strong bones, strides o'er the groaning
rocks:

He withers all in silence, and in his hand
Unclothes the earth, and freezes up frail life.

He takes his seat upon the cliffs,—the
mariner

Cries in vain. Poor little wretch, that
deal'st

With storms!—till heaven smiles, and the
monster

Is driv'n yelling to his caves beneath mount
Hecla.²

SONG

How sweet I roamed from field to field
And tasted all the summer's pride,
Till I the Prince of Love beheld
Who in the sunny beams did glide!

He showed me lilies for my hair,
And blushing roses for my brow;
He led me through his gardens fair
Where all his golden pleasures grow.

With sweet May dews my wings were wet,
And Phœbus fired my vocal rage;
He caught me in his silken net,
And shut me in his golden cage.

He loves to sit and hear me sing,
Then, laughing, sports and plays with me;
Then stretches out my golden wing,
And mocks my loss of liberty.

¹This and the four following poems are from *Poetical Sketches*, 1783.

²In southwestern Iceland.

SONG

My silks and fine array,
My smiles and languished air,
By love are driv'n away;
And mournful lean Despair
Brings me yew to deck my grave;
Such end true lovers have.

His face is fair as heav'n
When springing buds unfold;
O why to him was't giv'n
Whose heart is wintry cold?
His breast is love's all-worshiped tomb,
Where all love's pilgrims come.

Bring me an axe and spade,
Bring me a winding-sheet;
When I my grave have made
Let winds and tempests beat:
Then down I'll lie as cold as clay.
True love doth pass away!

MAD SONG

THE wild winds weep,
And the night is a-cold;
Come hither, Sleep,
And my griefs unfold:
But lo! the morning peeps
Over the eastern steeps,
And the rustling beds of dawn
The earth do scorn.

Lo! to the vault
Of pavéd heaven,
With sorrow fraught
My notes are driven:
They strike the ear of night,
Make weep the eyes of day;
They make mad the roaring winds,
And with tempests play.

Like a fiend in a cloud,
With howling woe
After night I do crowd,
And with night will go;
I turn my back to the east
From whence comforts have increased;
For light doth seize my brain
With frantic pain.

TO THE MUSES

Whether on Ida's shady brow,
Or in the chambers of the East,
The chambers of the sun, that now
From ancient melody have ceased;

Whether in Heaven ye wander fair,
Or the green corners of the earth,
Or the blue regions of the air
Where the melodious winds have birth;

Whether on crystal rocks ye rove,
Beneath the bosom of the sea
Wand'ring in many a coral grove,
Fair Nine, forsaking Poetry!

How have you left the ancient love
That bards of old enjoyed in you!
The languid strings do scarcely move!
The sound is forced, the notes are few!

SONG FROM AN ISLAND
IN THE MOON¹

HEAR then the pride and knowledge a sailor!
His sprit sail, fore sail, main sail, and his
mizen.

A poor frail man—God wot! I know none
frailer,

I know no greater sinner than John Taylor.

INTRODUCTION TO
SONGS OF INNOCENCE²

PIPING down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:

"Pipe a song about a Lamb!"
So I piped with merry cheer.
"Piper, pipe that song again;"
So I piped: he wept to hear.

"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
Sing thy songs of happy cheer:"
So I sang the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

¹*An Island in the Moon* is a satirical sketch which Blake never completed. It was written probably in 1784, or shortly thereafter. It was first printed in full by E. J. Ellis in *The Real Blake*, 1907.

²This and the five following poems are from *Songs of Innocence*, 1789.

"Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book, that all may read."
So he vanished from my sight,
And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

THE LAMB

LITTLE Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed,
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb,
He is meek, and He is mild;
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by His name.
Little Lamb, God bless thee!
Little Lamb, God bless thee!

INFANT JOY

"I HAVE no name:
I am but two days old.'
What shall I call thee?
"I happy am,
Joy is my name."
Sweet joy befell thee!

Pretty Joy!
Sweet Joy, but two days old.
Sweet joy I call thee:
Thou dost smile,
I sing the while,
Sweet joy befell thee!

THE LITTLE BLACK BOY

MY MOTHER bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but O! my soul is white;
White as an angel is the English child,
But I am black, as if bereaved of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree,
And, sitting down before the heat of day,
She took me on her lap and kisséd me,
And, pointing to the east, began to say:

"Look on the rising sun,—there God does
live,
And gives His light, and gives His heat away;
And flowers and trees and beasts and men re-
ceive
Comfort in morning, joy in the noonday.

"And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love;
And these black bodies and this sunburnt face
Is but a cloud, and like a shady grove:

"For when our souls have learned the heat to
bear,
The cloud will vanish; we shall hear His
voice,
Saying: 'Come out from the grove, My love
and care,
And round My golden tent like lambs re-
joice.'"

Thus did my mother say, and kisséd me;
And thus I say to little English boy.
When I from black and he from white cloud
free,
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy,

I'll shade him from the heat, till he can bear
To lean in joy upon our Father's knee;
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,
And be like him, and he will then love me.

A CRADLE SONG

SWEET dreams, form a shade
O'er my lovely infant's head;
Sweet dreams of pleasant streams
By happy, silent, moony beams.

Sweet sleep, with soft down
Weave thy brows an infant crown.
Sweet sleep, Angel mild,
Hover o'er my happy child.

Sweet smiles, in the night
Hover over my delight;
Sweet smiles, mother's smiles,
All the livelong night beguiles.

Sweet moans, dovelike sighs,
Chase not slumber from thy eyes.
Sweet moans, sweeter smiles,
All the dovelike moans beguiles.

Sleep, sleep, happy child,
All creation slept and smiled;
Sleep, sleep, happy sleep,
While o'er thee thy mother weep

Sweet babe, in thy face
Holy image I can trace.
Sweet babe, once like thee,
Thy Maker lay and wept for me

Wept for me, for thee, for all,
When He was an infant small.
Thou His image ever see,
Heavenly face that smiles on thee,

Smiles on thee, on me, on all;
Who became an infant small.
Infant smiles are His own smiles;
Heaven and earth to peace beguiles.

THE DIVINE IMAGE

To MERCY, Pity, Peace, and Love
All pray in their distress;
And to these virtues of delight
Return their thankfulness.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is God, our Father dear,
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is man, His child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart,
Pity a human face,
And Love, the human form divine.
And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man, of every clime,
That prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine,
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form,
In heathen, Turk, or Jew;
Where Mercy, Love, and Pity dwell
There God is dwelling too.

THE FLY¹

LITTLE Fly,
Thy summer's play
My thoughtless hand
Has brushed away.

Am not I
A fly like thee?
Or art not thou
A man like me?

For I dance,
And drink, and sing,
Till some blind hand
Shall brush my wing.

If thought is life
And strength and breath,
And the want
Of thought is death;

Then am I
A happy fly,
If I live
Or if I die.

THE TIGER

TIGER! Tiger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

THE CLOD AND THE PEBBLE

"Love seeketh not itself to please,
Nor for itself hath any care,
But for another gives its ease,
And builds a Heaven in Hell's despair."

So sung a little Clod of Clay,
Trodden with the cattle's feet,
But a Pebble of the brook
Warbled out these meters meet:

"Love seeketh only Self to please,
To bind another to its delight,
Joys in another's loss of ease,
And builds a Hell in Heaven's despite."

A LITTLE BOY LOST

"NOUGHT loves another as itself,
Nor venerates another so,
Nor is it possible to Thought
A greater than itself to know:

"And, Father, how can I love you
Or any of my brothers more?
I love you like the little bird
That picks up crumbs around the door."

The Priest sat by and heard the child,
In trembling zeal he seized his hair:
He led him by his little coat,
And all admired the priestly care.

And standing on the altar high,
"Lo! what a fiend is here," said he,
"One who sets reason up for judge
Of our most holy Mystery."

¹This and the four following poems are from *Songs of Experience*, 1794.

The weeping child could not be heard,
 The weeping parents wept in vain;
 They stripped him to his little shirt,
 And bound him in an iron chain;

And burned him in a holy place,
 Where many had been burned before:
 The weeping parents wept in vain.
 Are such things done on Albion's shore?

INFANT SORROW

MY MOTHER groaned, my father wept,
 Into the dangerous world I leapt;
 Helpless, naked, piping loud,
 Like a fiend hid in a cloud.

Struggling in my father's hands,
 Striving against my swaddling-bands,
 Bound and weary, I thought best
 To sulk upon my mother's breast.

STANZAS FROM *MILTON*¹

AND did those feet in ancient time
 Walk upon England's mountains green?
 And was the holy Lamb of God
 On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the Countenance Divine
 Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
 And was Jerusalem builded here
 Among these dark Satanic Mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
 Bring me my arrows of desire!
 Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold
 Bring me my chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight,
 Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
 Till we have built Jerusalem
 In England's green and pleasant land.

¹*Milton*, one of Blake's "prophetic books," was begun some time between 1800 and 1803, though the plates from which it was printed were not completed until 1808 or 1809.

ROBERT BURNS (1759-1796)

The parents of Burns both came of yeoman stock. Burns's father began life as a gardener and was later a small farmer, renting his land and toiling hard to wrest from it a bare living for himself and his family. Burns was born in the parish of Alloway, in Ayrshire, on 25 January, 1759, in a small clay cottage which his father had built with his own hands. He was the oldest of seven children, all of whom, as fast as they grew sufficiently to do anything useful, had to share the hard, incessant labors of the farm. His father moved to Mount Oliphant in 1766, and then to a somewhat better farm at Lochlie in 1777, where the family remained until the death of Burns's father in 1784. On these farms Burns grew to manhood, toiling like a galley slave, as he said, and yet managing to get the rudiments of an education and to do—for one in his circumstances at least—much reading. In a letter written in 1787 he says, "Though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and by the time I was ten or eleven years of age I was a critic in substantives, verbs, and particles. In my infant and boyish days, too, I owe much to an old woman who resided in the family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantraips, giants, enchanted towers, dragons and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of poetry; but had so strong an effect on my imagination that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp lookout in suspicious places. . . . The first two books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books I ever read since, were *The Life of Hannibal* and *The History of Sir William Wallace*. . . . What I know of ancient story was gathered from Salmon's and Guthrie's *Geographical Grammars*; and the ideas I had formed of modern manners of literature and criticism I got from the *Spectator*. These, with Pope's works, some plays of Shakespeare, Tull and Dickson *On Agriculture*, the *Pantheon*, Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*, Stackhouse's *History of the Bible*, Justice's *British Gardener's Directory*, Boyle's *Lectures*, Allan Ramsay's works, Taylor's *Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin*, *A Select Collection of English Songs*, and Hervey's *Meditations*, had formed the whole of my reading [when sixteen years old]. The collection of songs was my *vade mecum*. I pored over them, driving my cart or walking to labor, song by song, verse by verse, carefully noting the true, tender, or sublime from affectation and fustian. I am convinced I owe to this practice much of my critic-craft, such as it is. . . . The addition of two more authors to my library gave me great pleasure: Sterne and Mackenzie—*Tristram Shandy* and *The Man of Feeling*—were my bosom favorites. Poesy was still a darling walk for my mind, but it was only indulged in according to the humor of the hour. I had usually half a dozen or more pieces on hand; I took up one or other, as it suited the momentary tone of the mind, and dismissed the work as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, when once lighted up, raged like so many devils till they got vent in rhyme; and then the conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet."

In 1781 Burns left the farm at Lochlie to try flax-dressing at Irvine. He did not prosper at this, but did learn the bad habits of loose companions he found in the town. He was a man of turbulent passions and weak will, and if his life was a life of song, he tended from this time more and more to unite with song the other two members of the famous triad. One of his friends at Irvine was a certain Richard Brown, who, said Burns, "was the only man I ever saw who was a greater fool than myself when Woman was the presiding star." After the death of their father in 1784 Burns and his brother Gilbert took Mossiel farm, several miles from Lochlie. In the same year, too, Burns met Jean Armour, who later bore him a child, and whom he finally married in 1788. Things going badly on the farm, Burns resolved to emigrate to Jamaica; and it was in order to obtain money for his passage that he published a volume of his poems at Kilmarnock in 1786. The edition was soon sold, and its success led him to remain and bring out a second edition at Edinburgh in the following year. Burns was in Edinburgh through the winters of 1786-1787 and 1787-1788. There also his poems succeeded, netting him a profit of some £500, and attracting much social attention to himself. The latter was at first pleasing to him, but probably did him more harm than good, as he was disappointed in the hope of getting any substantial help from his new acquaintances and soon discovered that he was merely the object of a temporary curiosity. In 1788 he took a farm at Ellisland—chosen, it has been said, rather with a poet's than a farmer's eye—and settled there with Jean Armour. He found it impossible, however, to make a living from the farm, and in 1789 took a position in the excise. In 1791 he gave up the farm and moved to the

near-by town of Dumfries. During these years Burns wrote less and less as he drank more and more. He died, wrecked in both health and reputation by his habits, on 21 July, 1796.

Death came to Burns as a friend. His life was ruined, and his work as a poet was done. As Principal Shairp has said, "At the basis of all his power lay absolute truthfulness, intense reality, truthfulness to the objects which he saw, truthfulness to himself as the seer of them." This the failures of his life did not prevent, and this, doubtless, is the secret of the permanence of his fame. His intensity and his truthfulness have made him for all time one of the greatest of lyric poets.

MARY MORISON¹

O MARY, at thy window be,
It is the wished, the trysted hour!
Those smiles and glances let me see,
That make the miser's treasure poor:
How blithely wad I bide the stoure,²
A weary slave frae sun to sun,
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison.

Yestreen,³ when to the trembling string
The dance gaed⁴ thro' the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard nor saw:
Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,⁵
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sighed, and said among them a',
"Ye are na Mary Morison."

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,⁶
At least be pity to me shown!
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison.

EPISTLE TO JOHN LAPRAIK, AN OLD SCOT- TISH BARD⁷

WHILE briers an' woodbines budding green,
An' pairtricks scraichin' loud⁸ at e'en,
An' morning poussie whiddin'⁹ seen,
Inspire my Muse,
This freedom, in an unknown frien',
I pray excuse.

¹Written in 1780 or 1781. From a statement by Gilbert Burns it has been inferred (perhaps wrongly) that the subject of this song was Alison Begbie.

²Would I bear the struggle. ³Last night. ⁴Went.

⁵Fine, handsome. ⁶Not give.

⁷Written in the spring of 1785. Lapraik (1727-

On Fasten-een¹⁰ we had a rockin',¹¹
To ca' the crack¹² and weave our stockin';
And there was muckle¹³ fun and jokin',

Ye need na doubt;
At length we had a hearty yokin'¹⁴
At "sang about."¹⁵

There was ae¹⁶ sang, among the rest,
Aboon¹⁷ them a' it pleased me best,
That some kind husband had addressed
To some sweet wife:
It thirled¹⁸ the heart-strings thro' the breast,
A' to the life.

I've scarce heard ought described sae weel,
What gen'rous, manly bosoms feel;
Thought I "Can this be Pope, or Steele,
Or Beattie's wark?"
They tauld me 'twas an odd kind chiel¹⁹
About Muirkirk.

It pat me fidgin' fain²⁰ to hear't,
And sae about him there I spiered,²¹
Then a' that kenned²² him round declared
He had ingine,²³
That nane excelled it, few cam near't,
It was sae fine.

That, set him to a pint of ale,
An' either douce²⁴ or merry tale,
Or rhymes an' sangs he'd made himsel,
Or witty catches,²⁵
'Tween Inverness and Teviotdale,
He had few matches.

1807) was an Ayrshire poet who, until he lost all his means in 1772, possessed an estate near Muirkirk. Burns addressed two other epistles to him, both also written in 1785. The song referred to in the third stanza is Lapraik's *When I upon thy bosom lean*.

⁸Partridges calling.

⁹The hare scudding. ¹⁰Evening before Lent.

¹¹Social meeting. ¹²To have a chat. ¹³Much.

¹⁴Set-to. ¹⁵I. e., each in turn sang a song.

¹⁶One. ¹⁷Above. ¹⁸Thrilled. ¹⁹Chap.

²⁰Made me tingle with pleasure.

²¹Asked. ²²Knew. ²³Genius. ²⁴Sober.

²⁵Three-part songs, each sung in turn.

Then up I gat, an' swoor an aith,¹
 Tho' I should pawn my pleugh and graith,²
 Or die a cadger pownie's³ death,
 At some dyke-back,⁴
 A pint an' gill I'd gie them baith
 To hear your crack.⁵

But, first an' foremost, I should tell,
 Amaist⁶ as soon as I could spell,
 I to the crambo-jingle⁷ fell;
 Tho' rude an' rough,
 Yet crooning to a body's sel,
 Does weel enough.

I am nae poet, in a sense,
 But just a rhymmer, like, by chance,
 An' hae to learning nae pretense,
 Yet what the matter?
 Whene'er my Muse does on me glance,
 I jingle at her.

Your critic-folk may cock their nose,
 And say "How can you e'er propose,
 You wha ken hardly verse frae prose,
 To mak a sang?"
 But, by your leaves, my learned foes,
 Ye're maybe wrang.

What's a' your jargon o' your schools,
 Your Latin names for horns⁸ an' stools;
 If honest nature made you fools,
 What sairs⁹ your grammars?
 Ye'd better ta'en up spades and shoos,¹⁰
 Or knappin'-hammers.¹¹

A set o' dull conceited hashies¹²
 Confuse their brains in college classes!
 They gang¹³ in stirks,¹⁴ and come out asses,
 Plain truth to speak;
 An' syne¹⁵ they think to climb Parnassus
 By dint o' Greek!

Gie me ae spark o' nature's fire,
 That's a' the learning I desire;
 Then tho' I drudge thro' dub¹⁶ an' mire
 At pleugh or cart,
 My Muse, though hamely in attire,
 May touch the heart.

O for a spunk¹⁷ o' Allan's¹⁸ glee,
 Or Fergusson's,¹⁹ the bauld an' slee,²⁰
 Or bright Lapraik's, my friend to be,
 If I can hit it!
 That would be lear²¹ enough for me,
 If I could get it.

Now, sir, if ye hae friends enow,
 Tho' real friends, I b'lieve, are few,
 Yet, if your catalogue be fou,²²
 I'se no²³ insist,
 But gif ye want ae friend that's true,
 I'm on your list.

I winna blaw²⁴ about mysel,
 As ill I like my fauts to tell;
 But friends, an' folks that wish me well,
 They sometimes roose²⁵ me;
 Tho' I maun²⁶ own, as mony still
 As far abuse me.

There's ae wee faut they whiles²⁷ lay to me,
 I like the lasses—Gude²⁸ forgie me!
 For mony a plack²⁹ they wheedle frae³⁰ me,
 At dance or fair;
 Maybe some ither thing they gie me
 They weel can spare.

But Mauchline³¹ race, or Mauchline fair,
 I should be proud to meet you there;
 We'se gie ae night's discharge to care,
 If we forgather,
 An' hae a swap³² o' rhymin'-ware
 Wi' ane anither.

The four-gill chap, we'se gar³³ him clatter,
 An' kirsen³⁴ him wi' reekin³⁵ water;
 Syne we'll sit down an' tak our whitter,³⁶
 To cheer our heart;
 An' faith, we'se be acquainted better
 Before we part.

Awa, ye selfish warly³⁷ race,
 Wha think that havins,³⁸ sense, an' grace,
 E'en love an' friendship, should give place

¹⁷Spark. ¹⁸Allan Ramsay (1686–1758).

¹⁹Robert Fergusson (1750–1774).

²⁰The bold and clever. ²¹Learning. ²²Full. ²³I'll not.

²⁴I will not brag. ²⁵Praise. ²⁶Must. ²⁷Sometimes.

²⁸God. ²⁹Scotch coin of small value. ³⁰From.

³¹This town is not far from Mossiel Farm. It is the town where Burns married Jean Armour.

³²An exchange. ³³The four-gill cup, we'll make.

³⁴Christen. ³⁵Steaming. ³⁶Draught.

³⁷Worldly. ³⁸Manners.

¹Swore an oath. ²Plough and harness.

³Peddler's pony's. ⁴Behind a fence. ⁵Talk. ⁶Almost.

⁷Rhyming (Crambo is a game in which one has to supply a rhyme to a word given by another).

⁸Ink-horns(?). ⁹Serves. ¹⁰Shovels.

¹¹Hammers for breaking stone. ¹²Fools. ¹³Go.

¹⁴Young bullocks. ¹⁵Then. ¹⁶Puddle.

To catch-the-plack!¹
 I dinna² like to see your face,
 Nor hear your crack.
 But ye whom social pleasure charms,
 Whose hearts the tide of kindness warms
 Who hold your being on the terms,
 "Each aid the others,"
 Come to my bowl, come to my arms,
 My friends, my brothers!

But to conclude my lang epistle,
 As my auld pen's worn to the gristle;
 Twa lines frae you wad gar me fistle,³
 Who am, most fervent,
 While I can either sing, or whistle,
 Your friend and servant.

TO A LOUSE⁴

ON SEEING ONE ON A LADY'S BONNET AT
 CHURCH

Ha! wh'ARE ye gaun, ye crowlin' ferlie!⁵
 Your impudence protects you sairly:⁶
 I canna say but ye strunt⁷ rarely,
 Owre gauze and lace;
 Tho' faith! I fear ye dine but sparely
 On sic a place.

Ye ugly, creepin', blastit wonner,⁸
 Detested, shunned by saunt an' sinner!
 How dare ye set your fit⁹ upon her,
 Sae fine a lady?
 Gae somewhere else, and seek your dinner
 On some poor body.

Swith,¹⁰ in some beggar's haffet squattle,¹¹
 There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprat-
 tle¹²
 Wi' ither kindred jumping cattle,
 In shoals and nations;
 Where horn nor bane¹³ ne'er dare unsettle
 Your thick plantations.

Now haud¹⁴ ye there, ye're out o' sight,
 Below the fatt'rels,¹⁵ snug an' tight;
 Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right
 Till ye've got on it,
 The very tapmost tow'ring height
 O' Miss's bonnet.

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,
 As plump and gray as onie grozet;¹⁶
 O for some rank mercurial rozet,¹⁷
 Or fell red smeddum!¹⁸
 I'd gie you sic a hearty dose o't,
 Wad dress your droddum!¹⁹

I wad na been surprised to spy
 You on an auld wife's flannen toy;²⁰
 Or aiblins²¹ some bit duddie²² boy,
 On's wyliecoat;²³
 But Miss's fine Lunardi!²⁴ fie,
 How daur ye do't?

O Jenny, dinna toss your head,
 An' set your beauties a' ahead!²⁵
 Ye little ken what curséd speed
 The blastie's makin'!²⁶
 Thae²⁷ winks and finger-ends, I dread,
 Are notice takin'!

O wad some Pow'r the giftie²⁸ gie us
 To see oursels as others see us!
 It wad frae mony a blunder free us,
 And foolish notion:
 What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
 And e'en devotion!

TO A MOUSE²⁹

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE
 PLOUGH

WEE, sleekit,³⁰ cow'rin', tim'rous beastie,
 O what a panic's in thy breastie!
 Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
 Wi' bickering brattle!³¹
 I wad be laith³² to rin an' chase thee
 Wi' murd'ring pattle!³³

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
 Has broken nature's social union,
 An' justifies that ill opinion
 Which makes thee startle
 At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
 An' fellow-mortal!

¹⁶Gooseberry. ¹⁷Rosin. ¹⁸Powder. ¹⁹Breech.

²⁰Flannel head-dress. ²¹Maybe. ²²Small ragged.

²³Flannel vest.

²⁴Bonnet, named after Lunardi, an aeronaut.

²⁵Abroad. ²⁶The blasted creature is making.

²⁷Those. ²⁸Small gift.

²⁹Written in November, 1785. ³⁰Sleek.

³¹Hurrying scamper. ³²Loath. ³³Plough-spade.

¹The hunt for coin. ²Do not. ³Make me tingle.

⁴Written in 1786. ⁵Crawling wonder. ⁶Greatly.

⁷Strut. ⁸Blasted wonder. ⁹Foot.

¹⁰Quick, i. e., "Off with you!" ¹¹Temples sprawl.

¹²Struggle. ¹³Comb nor poison. ¹⁴Hold.

¹⁵Ribbon-ends.

I doubt na, whyles,¹ but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen-icker in a thrave²

'S a sma' request:

I'll get a blessin' wi' the lave,³
And never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin'!
An' naething, now, to big⁴ a new ane,
O' foggage green!⁵
An' bleak December's winds ensuin',
Baith snell⁶ an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare and waste,
An' weary winter comin' fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel couler⁷ past
Out-thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,⁸

To thole⁹ the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch¹⁰ cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,¹¹
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft a-gley,¹²
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain
For promised joy.

Still thou art blest compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But oh! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear!
An' forward tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY¹³

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH

WEE modest crimson-tippéd flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush among the stoure¹⁴

¹Sometimes. ²An odd ear in 24 sheaves.

³With what's left. ⁴Build. ⁵Coarse grass.

⁶Both bitter. ⁷Cutter on plough to cut the sward.

⁸Without house or abode. ⁹Endure.

¹⁰Hoar-frost. ¹¹Not alone. ¹²Go often astray.

¹³Written in April, 1786.

Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonnie gem.

Alas! it's no thy neibor sweet,
The bonnie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet
Wi' spreckled breast,
When upward springing, blithe, to greet
The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce reared above the parent-earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield
High shelt'ring woods and wa's¹⁵ maun shield,
But thou, beneath the random bield¹⁶
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,¹⁷
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawy bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade,
By love's simplicity betrayed,
And guileless trust,
Till she like thee, all soiled, is laid
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starred:
Unskillful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By human pride or cunning driv'n
To mis'ry's brink,
Till wrenched of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,
He, ruined, sink!

¹³Dust. ¹⁵Walls. ¹⁶Shelter. ¹⁷Bare stubble-field.

E'en thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
 That fate is thine—no distant date;
 Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives elate
 Full on thy bloom,
 Till crushed beneath the furrow's weight
 Shall be thy doom!

THE COTTER'S SATUR- DAY NIGHT¹

MY LOVED, my honored, much respected
 friend!

No mercenary bard his homage pays:
 With honest pride I scorn each selfish
 end,

My dearest meed a friend's esteem and
 praise:

To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
 The lowly train in life's sequestered scene;
 The native feelings strong, the guileless
 ways;

What Aiken in a cottage would have
 been—

Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier
 there, I ween.

November chill' blaws loud wi' angry
 sough;²

The short'ning winter-day is near a
 close;

The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
 The black'ning trains o' craws³ to their
 repose:

The toil-worn Cotter⁴ frae his labor
 goes,

This night his weekly moil is at an end,
 Collects his spades, his mattocks, and
 his hoes,

Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
 And weary, o'er the moor, his course does
 hameward bend.

¹Written in November, 1785, or shortly thereafter. Burns used as a motto for this poem a stanza from Gray's *Elegy* ("Let not Ambition mock their useful toil," etc.), and addressed it to Robert Aiken (1739-1807), an Ayrshire solicitor. Aiken subscribed for 105 copies of the Kilmarnock edition of Burns's poems. The Spenserian stanza Burns borrowed, not from Spenser, whom he had not yet read at this time, but from Beattie, Shenstone, and Thomson.

²Wail. ³Crows.

⁴Cottager, peasant occupying a small holding.

⁵Totter.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
 Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
 Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin', stacher⁵
 through

To meet their Dad, wi' flichterin'⁶ noise
 an' glee.

His wee bit ingle,⁷ blinkin bonnilie,⁸
 His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's
 smile,

The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
 Does a' his weary kiaugh⁹ and care be-
 guile,

An' makes him quite forget his labor an' his
 toil.

Belyve,¹⁰ the elder bairns come drapping
 in,

At service out, amang the farmers roun';
 Some ca'¹¹ the pleugh, some herd, some
 tentie rin¹²

A cannie¹³ errand to a neibor town:¹⁴

Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman-
 grown,

In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her
 e'e,

Comes hame, perhaps to shew a brow¹⁵
 new gown,

Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,¹⁶

To help her parents dear, if they in hardship
 be.

With joy unfeigned brothers and sisters
 meet,

An' each for other's weelfare kindly
 spiers:¹⁷

The social hours, swift-winged, unnoticed
 fleet;

Each tells the uncos¹⁸ that he sees or
 hears;

The parents, partial, eye their hopeful
 years;

Anticipation forward points the view.

The mother, wi' her needle an' her
 sheers,

Gars auld claes look amais¹⁹ as weel's the
 new;

The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

⁶Fluttering. ⁷Fire-place. ⁸Shining prettily.

⁹Worry. ¹⁰Soon. ¹¹Drive. ¹²Heedful run. ¹³Quiet.

¹⁴Farm-house, with its surroun'g buildings.

¹⁵Fine. ¹⁶Hard-earned wages. ¹⁷Asks.

¹⁸Strange things.

¹⁹Makes old clothes look almost.

Their master's an' their mistress's command,

The younkers a' are warn'd to obey;
An' mind their labors wi' an eydent¹ hand,
An' ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk² or play:

"And O! be sure to fear the Lord alway,
An' mind your duty, duly, morn an' night!
Lest in temptation's path yegang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright!"

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,

Tells how a neibor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.

The wily mother sees the conscious flame

Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
Wi' heart-struck anxious care, inquires his name,

While Jenny haffins³ is afraid to speak;
Weel pleased the mother hears it's nae wild worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;⁴

A strappin' youth; he takes the mother's eye;

Blithe Jenny sees the visit's no ill ta'en;
The father cracks⁵ of horses, pleughs, and kye.⁶

The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,

But blate and laithfu',⁷ scarce can weel behave;

The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy

What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave;

Weel-pleased to think her bairn's respected like the lave.⁸

O happy love! where love like this is found;
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!

I've paced much this weary mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare—

¹Diligent. ²Trifle. ³Partly. ⁴In. ⁵Talks.

⁶Cows. ⁷Shy and bashful. ⁸Rest.

"If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,

One curd in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair

In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,

Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the evening gale."

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart—

A wretch, a villain, lost to love and truth—

That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?

Curse on his perjured arts, dissembling smooth!

Are honor, virtue, conscience, all exiled?

Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?

Then paints the ruined maid, and their distraction wild?

But now the supper crowns their simple board,

The halesome parritch,⁹ chief of Scotia's food:

The sowpe¹⁰ their only hawkie¹¹ does afford,
That 'yont the hallan¹² snugly chows her cood;

The dame brings forth in complimentary mood,

To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell;¹³

And aft he's pressed, and aft he ca's it good;

The frugal wife, garrulous, will tell

How 'twas a towmond¹⁴ auld sin' lint was i' the bell.¹⁵

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face
They round the ingle form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible,¹⁶ ance his father's pride:

⁹Wholesome porridge. ¹⁰Milk. ¹¹Cow.

¹²Beyond the wall. ¹³Her well-saved cheese, ripe.

¹⁴Twelve-month. ¹⁵Since flax was in flower.

¹⁶Hall-Bible ("So called from its original use in the noble's hall, wherein the whole household assembled for religious services."—Henley and Henderson).

His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
 His lyart haffets¹ wearing thin an' bare;
 Those strains that once did sweet in
 Zion glide—
 He wales² a portion with judicious care,
 And "Let us worship God!" he says with
 solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple
 guise;
 They tune their hearts, by far the no-
 blest aim:
 Perhaps *Dundee's* wild warbling measures
 rise,
 Or plaintive *Martyrs*, worthy of the
 name;
 Or noble *Elgin*³ beets⁴ the heav'nward
 flame,
 The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
 Compared with these, Italian trills are
 tame;
 The tickled ears no heartfelt raptures
 raise;
 Nae unison hae they with our Creator's
 praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred
 page,
 How Abram was the friend of God on
 high;
 Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
 With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
 Or how the royal bard⁵ did groaning lie
 Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging
 ire;
 Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing
 cry;
 Or rapt Isaiah's wild seraphic fire;
 Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the
 theme,
 How guiltless blood for guilty man was
 shed;
 How He who bore in Heaven the second
 name
 Had not on earth whereon to lay His
 head;
 How His first followers and servants sped;

The precepts sage they wrote to many a
 land:
 How he,⁶ who lone in Patmos banishéd,
 Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
 And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounced
 by Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal
 King
 The saint, the father, and the husband
 prays:
 Hope "springs exulting on triumphant
 wing"⁷
 That thus they all shall meet in future
 days:
 There ever bask in uncreated rays,
 No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
 Together hymning their Creator's praise,
 In such society, yet still more dear;
 While circling Time moves round in an
 eternal sphere.

Compared with this, how poor Religion's
 pride,
 In all the pomp of method and of art,
 When men display to congregations wide
 Devotion's every grace, except the
 heart!
 The Power, incensed, the pageant will
 desert,
 The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
 But haply, in some cottage far apart,
 May hear, well pleased, the language of
 the soul;
 And in His Book of Life the inmates poor
 enroll.

Then homeward all take off their several
 way;
 The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
 The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
 And proffer up to Heav'n the warm
 request,
 That He who stills the raven's clamorous
 nest,
 And decks the lily fair in flowery pride,
 Would, in the way His wisdom sees the
 best,
 For them and for their little ones provide;
 But chiefly in their hearts with grace divine
 preside.

¹Gray side-locks. ²Chooses. ³All sacred melodies.

⁴Fans. ⁵King David. ⁶John.

⁷Pope, *Windsor Forest*, l. 112, inexactly quoted.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man's the noblest work of God;"¹
And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refined!

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And O may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile;
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved isle.

O Thou! who poured the patriotic tide
That streamed thro' Wallace's² undaunted heart,
Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die—the second glorious part,
(The patriot's God, peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never, Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL³

O THOU! whatever title suit thee,
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,⁴
Wha in yon cavern grim an' sootie,

¹Pope, *Essay on Man*, Epistle IV, l. 248.

²William Wallace (1274?–1305), the Scottish national hero. Burns wrote in a letter: "The story of Wallace poured a Scottish prejudice into my veins which will boil along there till the floodgates of life shut in eternal rest."

³Written at Mossgiel towards the end of 1785. Burns used for a motto ll. 128–9 of *Paradise Lost*, Bk. I:

Closed under hatches,
Spairges⁵ about the brunstane cootie,⁶
To scaud⁷ poor wretches!

Hear me, auld Hangie,⁸ for a wee,⁹
An' let poor damnéd bodies be;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
E'en to a deil,
To skelp¹⁰ an' scaud poor dogs like me,
An' hear us squeal!

Great is thy pow'r, an' great thy fame;
Far kenned an' noted is thy name;
An', tho' yon lowin heugh's¹¹ thy hame,
Thou travels far;
An' faith! thou's neither lag¹² nor lame,
Nor blate nor scaur.¹³

Whyles¹⁴ rangin' like a roarin' lion
For prey, a' holes an' corners tryin';
Whyles on the strong-winged tempest flyin',
Tirlin' the kirks;¹⁵
Whyles, in the human bosom pryin',
Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my reverend grannie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or, where auld ruined castles gray
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way,
Wi' eldritch croon.¹⁶

When twilight did my grannie summon
To say her pray'rs, douce,¹⁷ honest woman!
Aft yont¹⁸ the dyke she's heard you bum-
min',¹⁹

Wi' eerie drone;²⁰
Or, rustlin', thro' the boortrees²¹ comin',
Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary windy winter night
The stars shot down wi' sklentint²² light,
Wi' you mysel I gat a fright
Ayont the lough;²³
Ye like a rash-buss²⁴ stood in sight
Wi' waving sough.²⁵

"O Prince, O Chief of many thronéd Powers
That led the embattled Seraphim to war."

⁴Little hoof. ⁵Splashes. ⁶Brimstone tub. ⁷Scald.

⁸Old hangman. ⁹For a minute. ¹⁰Spank.

¹¹Flaming hollow. ¹²Backward.

¹³Nor bashful nor timid. ¹⁴Sometimes.

¹⁵Uncovering the churches. ¹⁶Hideous groan.

¹⁷Grave. ¹⁸Beyond. ¹⁹Humming.

²⁰With unearthly sound. ²¹Elder bushes. ²²Slanting.

²³Beyond the pond. ²⁴Bush of rushes. ²⁵Moan.

The cudgel in my nieve¹ did shake,
Each bristled hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch, stoor² "quaick,
quaick,"

Amang the springs,
Awa ye squattered like a drake
On whistlin' wings.

Let warlocks³ grim, an' withered hags,
Tell how wi' you on ragweed nags⁴
They skim the muirs,⁵ an' dizzy crags
Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues
Owre howkit⁶ dead.

Thence country wives, wi' toil an' pain,
May plunge an' plunge the kirk⁷ in vain;
For oh! the yellow treasure's taen
By witchin' skill;
An' dawtit twal-pint Hawkie's gane
As yell's the bill.⁸

Thence mystic knots mak great abuse
On young guidmen,⁹ fond, keen, an' crouse;¹⁰
When the best wark-lume¹¹ i' the house,
By cantrip¹² wit,
Is instant made no worth a louse,
Just at the bit.¹³

When thowes¹⁴ dissolve the snawy hoord,
An' float the jinglin' icy-board,¹⁵
Then water-kelpies¹⁶ haunt the foord,
By your d'rection,
An' 'nighted trav'lers are allured
To their destruction.

An' aft your moss-traversing punkies¹⁷
Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is:
The bleezin',¹⁸ curst, mischievous monnies
Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
Ne'er mair to rise.

When masons' mystic word an' grip
In storms an' tempests raise you up,

¹Fist. ²With an hideous, harsh. ³Wizards.

⁴Ragwort stems;—the witch's steed, more usually a broomstick.

⁵Moors. ⁶Over dug-up. ⁷Churn.

⁸And the petted twelve-pint cow has gone as dry as the bull. (A Scottish pint is rather more than a quart.)

⁹Husbands. ¹⁰Bold. ¹¹Tool. ¹²Magic.

¹³Just when most needed. ¹⁴Thaws. ¹⁵Surface of ice.

¹⁶Water-spirits, usually in the form of horses.

¹⁷Bog-traversing will-o'-the-wisps. ¹⁸Blazing.

Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,¹⁹
Or, strange to tell!
The youngest brither ye wad whip
Aff straught to hell.

Lang syne,²⁰ in Eden's bonnie yard,
When youthfu' lovers first were paired,
And all the soul of love they shared,
The raptured hour,
Sweet on the fragrant flow'ry swaird,
In shady bow'r;

Then you, ye auld snick-drawing²¹ dog!
Ye cam to Paradise incog,
An' played on man a curséd brogue,²²
(Black be you fa'!²³)
An' gied the infant warld a shog,²⁴
'Maist ruined a'.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz,²⁵
Wi' reekit²⁶ duds, an' reestit gizz,²⁷
Ye did present your smoutie²⁸ phiz
'Mang better folk,
An' sklentend²⁹ on the man of Uz³⁰
Your spitefu' joke?

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
An' brak him out o' house an' hal',
While scabs an' blotches did him gall
Wi' bitter claw,
An' lows'd³¹ his ill-tongued wicked scawl,³²
Was warst ava?³³

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares an' fechtn'³⁴ fierce,
Sin' that day Michael did you pierce,
Down to this time,
Wad ding a' Lallan tongue, or Erse,³⁵
In prose or rhyme.

An' now, auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin',
A certain Bardie's rantin', drinkin',
Some luckless hour will send him linkin'³⁶
To your black pit;
But faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin',³⁷
An' cheat you yet.

But fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben!
O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!

¹⁹I. e., by being offered as a sacrifice. ²⁰Long since.

²¹Intruding. ²²Trick. ²³Lot. ²⁴Shock.

²⁵Bustling haste. ²⁶Smoky. ²⁷Scorched wig.

²⁸Smutty. ²⁹Squinted. ³⁰Job. ³¹Loosed. ³²Scold

³³Of all. ³⁴Fighting.

³⁵Would surpass a Lowland tongue or Gaelic.

³⁶Hurrying. ³⁷Dodging.

Ye aiblins¹ might—I dinna ken—
 Still hae a stake:²
 I'm wae³ to think upo' yon den,
 E'en for your sake!

A BARD'S EPITAPH⁴

IS THERE a whim-inspired fool,
 Owre fast for thought, owre hot for rule,
 Owre blate⁵ to seek, owre proud to snool,⁶
 Let him draw near;
 And owre this grassy heap sing dool,⁷
 And drap a tear.

Is there a bard of rustic song,
 Who, noteless, steals the crowds among,
 That weekly this aréa throng,
 O, pass not by!
 But, with a frater-feeling strong,
 Here heave a sigh.

Is there a man whose judgment clear,
 Can others teach the course to steer,
 Yet runs, himself, life's mad career,
 Wild as the wave;
 Here pause—and, thro' the starting tear,
 Survey this grave.

The poor inhabitant below
 Was quick to learn and wise to know,
 And keenly felt the friendly glow,
 And softer flame;
 But thoughtless follies laid him low,
 And stained his name!

Reader, attend! whether thy soul
 Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole,
 Or darkling grubs this earthly hole,
 In low pursuit;
 Know prudent cautious self-control
 Is wisdom's root.

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID, OR THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS⁸

My son, these maxims make a rule,
 And lump them aye thegither:
 The rigid righteous is a fool,
 The rigid wise anither:
 The cleanest corn that e'er was dight,⁹
 May hae some pyles o' caff in;¹⁰
 So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
 For random fits o' daffin.¹¹

—SOLOMON (Eccles., vii, 16).

O YE wha are sae guid yoursel,
 Sae pious and sae holy,
 Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
 Your neibor's fauts and folly!
 Whase life is like a weel-gaun¹² mill,
 Supplied wi' store o' water:
 The heapéd happer's¹³ ebbing still,
 And still the clap¹⁴ plays clatter:

Hear me, ye venerable core,¹⁵
 As counsel for poor mortals,
 That frequent pass douce¹⁶ Wisdom's door.
 For glaikit¹⁷ Folly's portals;
 I, for their thoughtless careless sakes,
 Would here propone¹⁸ defenses,—
 Their donsies¹⁹ tricks, their black mistakes,
 Their failings and mischances.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compared,
 And shudder at the niffer;²⁰
 But cast a moment's fair regard—
 What maks the mighty differ?
 Discount what scant occasion gave,
 That purity ye pride in,
 And (what's aft mair than a' the lave²¹)
 Your better art o' hidin'.

Think, when your castigated pulse
 Gies now and then a wallop,
 What ragings must his veins convulse,
 That still eternal gallop!
 Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
 Right on ye scud your sea-way;
 But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
 It maks an unco²² leeway.

See Social Life and Glee sit down,
 All joyous and unthinking,
 Till, quite transmogrified,²³ they're grown
 Debauchery and Drinking:
 O would they stay to calculate
 Th' eternal consequences;
 Or—your more dreaded hell to state—
 Damnation of expenses!

Ye high, exalted, virtuous Dames,
 Tied up in godly laces,
 Before ye gie poor Frailty names,
 Suppose a change o' cases;

¹²Well-going ¹³Hopper. ¹⁴Clapper. ¹⁵Company.

¹⁶Staid. ¹⁷Giddy. ¹⁸Propose. ¹⁹Restive.

²⁰Exchange. ²¹Rest. ²²Uncommon.

²³Transformed.

¹Perhaps. ²Have something to gain. ³Sad.

⁴Written in 1786. ⁵Modest. ⁶Cringe. ⁷Woe.

⁸Written in 1786. ⁹Winnowed.

¹⁰Grains of chaff in it. ¹¹Larking.

A dear loved lad, convenience snug,
A treacherous inclination—
But, let me whisper i' your lug,¹
Ye're aiblins² nae temptation.

Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Tho' they may gang a kennin³ wrang,
To step aside is human.
One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving why they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark
How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord, its various tone,
Each spring, its various bias.
Then at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted.

JOHN ANDERSON MY JO⁴

JOHN ANDERSON my jo,⁵ John,
When we were first acquent,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonnie brow was brent;⁶
But now your brow is beld,⁷ John,
Your locks are like the snow;
But blessings on your frosty pow,⁸
John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;
And mony a canty⁹ day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither:
Now we maun totter down, John,
And hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson, my jo.

THE LOVELY LASS OF INVERNESS¹⁰

THE lovely lass o' Inverness,
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;
For e'en and morn she cries, alas!
And aye the saut¹¹ tear blin's her e'e:

"Drumossie¹² moor, Drumossie day,
A waefu' day it was to me;
For there I lost my father dear,
My father dear, and brethren three.

"Their winding-sheet the bluidy¹³ clay,
Their graves are growing green to see;
And by them lies the dearest lad
That ever blest a woman's e'e!
Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,¹⁴
A bluidy man I trow¹⁵ thou be;
For mony a heart thou hast made sair,¹⁶
That ne'er did wrang¹⁷ to thine or thee."

A RED, RED ROSE¹⁸

MY LOVE is like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June:
My love is like the melodie
That's sweetly played in tune.

So fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in love am I:
And I will love thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun:
And I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only love,
And fare thee weel awhile!
And I will come again, my love,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

AULD LANG SYNE¹⁹

SHOULD auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne?²⁰

Chorus

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

¹²*I. e.*, Culloden. The poem commemorates the Battle of Culloden, fought on 16 April, 1746.

¹³Bloody. ¹⁴William of Cumberland. ¹⁵Believe.

¹⁶Sore. ¹⁷Wrong. ¹⁸Written probably in 1794.

¹⁹Written in 1788. ²⁰*I. e.*, old times.

¹Ear. ²Perhaps. ³Trifle. ⁴Written in 1788 or 1789.

⁵Sweetheart. ⁶Smooth. ⁷Bald. ⁸Head. ⁹Jolly.

¹⁰Written in 1794. ¹¹Salt.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,¹
 And surely I'll be mine;
 And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
 For auld lang syne.

We twa hae run about the braes,²
 And pu'd³ the gowans⁴ fine;
 But we've wandered mony a weary foot
 Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidled i' the burn,⁵
 From morning sun till dine;⁶
 But seas between us braid hae roared
 Sin' auld lang syne.

And there's a hand, my trusty fiere,⁷
 And gie's a hand o' thine;
 And we'll tak a right guid-willie waught,⁸
 For auld lang syne.

TAM GLEN⁹

MY HEART is a breaking, dear Tittie,¹⁰
 Some counsel unto me come len',
 To anger them a' is a pity;
 • But what will I do wi' Tam Glen?

I'm thinking, wi' sic a brow¹¹ fellow,
 In poortith¹² I might mak a fen';¹³
 What care I in riches to wallow,
 If I maunna¹⁴ marry Tam Glen?

There's Lowrie the laird o' Dumeller,
 "Guid-day to you," brute! he comes ben;¹⁵
 He brags and he blaws o' his siller,
 But when will he dance like Tam Glen?

My minnie¹⁶ does constantly deave¹⁷ me,
 And bids me beware o' young men;
 They flatter, she says, to deceive me;
 But wha can think sae o' Tam Glen?

My daddie says, gin¹⁸ I'll forsake him,
 He'll gie me guid hunder marks¹⁹ ten:
 But, if it's ordained I maun take him,
 O wha will I get but Tam Glen?

¹Pay for your three-pint measure. ²Hill-sides

³Pulled. ⁴Daisies. ⁵Paddled in the brook.

⁶Dinner-time. ⁷Comrade.

⁸Hearty good-will draught.

⁹Written in 1788 or 1789. ¹⁰Sister. ¹¹Such a fine.

¹²Poverty. ¹³Shift. ¹⁴Must not. ¹⁵In. ¹⁶Mother.

¹⁷Deafen. ¹⁸If.

¹⁹Coins worth slightly more than 26 cents each.

Yestreen at the Valentines' dealing,²⁰
 My heart to my mou gied a sten;²¹
 For thrice I drew ane without failing,
 And thrice it was written, Tam Glen.

The last Halloween I was waukin'
 My droukit sark-sleeve,²² as ye ken;
 His likeness cam up the house stalkin'—
 And the very gray breeks²³ o' Tam Glen!

Come, counsel, dear Tittie, don't tarry;
 I'll gie you my bonnie black hen,
 Gif ye will advise me to marry
 The lad I lo'e dearly, Tam Glen.

WILLIE BREWED A PECK O' MAUT²⁴

O WILLIE brewed a peck o' maut,
 And Rob and Allan cam to see;
 Three blither hearts, that lee-lang²⁵ night,
 Ye wad na found in Christendie.

Chorus

We are na fou,²⁶ we're no that fou,
 But just a drappie²⁷ in our e'e;
 The cock may craw, the day may daw,
 And aye we'll taste the barley bree.²⁸

Here are we met, three merry boys,
 Three merry boys, I trow, are we;
 And mony a night we've merry been,
 And mony mae we hope to be!

²⁰The custom was for the men and girls to pair off by drawing slips of paper with names written on them.

²¹To my mouth gave a spring.

²²Was watching my drenched shirt-sleeve. ("You go out, one or more—for this is a social spell—to a south-running spring, or rivulet, where 'three lairds' lands meet,' and dip your left shirt-sleeve. Go to bed in sight of a fire, and hang your wet sleeve before it to dry. Lie awake; and, some time near midnight, an apparition, having the exact figure of the grand object in question [your future husband], will come and turn the sleeve, as if to dry the other side of it."—Burns's note to *Halloween*, stanza 24, l. 7.)

²³Breeches.

²⁴Written in 1789. "The air is Masterton's; the song mine. The occasion of it was this:—Mr. Wm. Nicol of the High School, Edinburgh, during the autumn vacation being at Moffat, honest Allan (who was at that time on a visit to Dalswinton) and I went to pay Nicol a visit. We had such a joyous meeting that Mr. Masterton and I agreed, each in our own way, that we should celebrate the business."—Burns's note. Allan Masterton was appointed writing-master in the Edinburgh High School in the fall of 1789.

²⁵Live-long. ²⁶Full. ²⁷Small drop. ²⁸Barley-brew.

It is the moon, I ken her horn,
That's blinkin' in the lift¹ sae hie;
She shines sae bright to wyle² us hame,
But, by my sooth! she'll wait a wee.

Wha first shall rise to gang awa,
A cuckold, coward loun³ is he!
Wha first beside his chair shall fa',
He is the king among us three!

TO MARY IN HEAVEN⁴

THOU lingering star, with lessening ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usherest in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his
breast?

That sacred hour can I forget?
Can I forget the hallowed grove,
Where by the winding Ayr we met,
To live one day of parting love?
Eternity will not efface
Those records dear of transports past;
Thy image at our last embrace—
Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

Ayr gurgling kissed his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods, thickening
green;
The fragrant birch, and hawthorn hoar,
Twined amorous round the raptured
scene.

¹Sky. ²Entice. ³Rogue.

⁴Written in the fall of 1789. Mary Campbell, the subject of this poem, is generally supposed to have died in the fall of 1788, though about her, her relations with Burns, and the time of her death there is some uncertainty. Burns wrote the following note about *My Highland Lassie*, O: "My 'Highland Lassie' was a warm-hearted, charming young creature as ever blessed a man with generous love. After a pretty long tract of the most ardent reciprocal attachment we met by appointment on the second Sunday of May, in a sequestered spot by the banks of Ayr, where we spent the day in taking farewell, before she should embark for the West Highlands to arrange matters for our projected change of life. At the close of the autumn following she crossed the sea to meet me at Greenock, where she had scarce landed when she was seized with a malignant fever, which hurried my dear girl to the grave in a few days, before I could even hear of her illness."

The flowers sprang wanton to be pressed,
The birds sang love on ev'ry spray,
Till too too soon, the glowing west
Proclaimed the speed of wingéd day.

Still o'er these scenes my memory wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care!
Time but the impression deeper makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.
My Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy blissful place of rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his
breast?

SWEET AFTON⁵

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green
braes,⁶
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy
praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her
dream.

Thou stock-dove whose echo resounds
through the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny
den,
Thou green-crested lapwing, thy screaming
forbear,
I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.
How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighboring
hills,
Far marked with the courses of clear winding
rills;
There daily I wander as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my
eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys
below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses
blow;
There oft as mild ev'ning weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk⁷ shades my Mary and
me.

⁵Written, probably, early in 1789. There have been attempts to connect Mary Campbell with this poem, but Burns probably had no special person in mind. He stated that the poem was written as a compliment to the "small river Afton that flows into Nith, near New Cummock, which has some charming, wild, romantic scenery on its banks."

⁶Slopes. ⁷Birch.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it
glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary re-
sides;
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet
lave,
As gathering sweet flow'rets she stems thy
clear wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green
braes,
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my
lays;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her
dream.

TAM O' SHANTER¹

A TALE

WHEN chapman billies² leave the street,
And drouthy³ neibors neibors meet,
As markety-days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate,⁴
While we sit bousing at the nappy,⁵
An' getting fou and unco⁶ happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,⁷
The mosses, waters, slaps,⁸ and styles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Where sits our sulky sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

¹Written in 1790. Alloway Kirk is less than a mile south of Burns's birthplace. It fell into disuse after the annexation of the parish of Alloway to that of Ayr in 1690, and, when Burns wrote, it had long been ruinous. The old bridge over the Doon, which dates from the fifteenth century, stands about 200 yards to the south of the church. Burns had from his childhood heard witch-stories relating to Alloway Kirk, and *Tam o' Shanter* is based on one of them. It is said that Burns probably drew the suggestion of his hero from the character and adventures of Douglas Graham (1739-1811), a farmer noted for his convivial habits, and tenant of the farm of Shanter on the Carrick shore (Henley and Henderson, I, 437). Burns wrote to Mrs. Dunlop in 1791: "I look on *Tam o' Shanter* to be my standard performance in the poetical line. 'Tis true both the one [his new-born son] and the other discover a spice of roguish waggery that might perhaps be as well spared; but then they also show, in my opinion, a force of genius and a finishing polish that I despair of ever excelling."

²Peddler fellows. ³Thirsty. ⁴Road.

⁵Drinking ale. ⁶Getting full (drunk) and very.

⁷The Scottish mile was about an eighth longer than the English mile.

⁸The bogs, pools, gaps (in fences).

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter—
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses
For honest men and bonnie lasses).

O Tam! hadst thou but been sae wise
As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,⁹
A bletherin',¹⁰ blusterin', drunken blemum,¹¹
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was na sober;
That ilka melder¹² wi' the miller
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That every naig was ca'd¹³ a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roarin' fou on;
That at the Lord's house, even on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
She prophesied that, late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drowned in
Doon;

Or caught wi' warlocks in the mirk¹⁴
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet¹⁵

To think how many counsels sweet,
How many lengthened sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right,
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats,¹⁶ that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter¹⁷ Johnny,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony;
Tam lo'ed him like a very brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter,
And aye the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
Wi' favors secret, sweet, and precious;
The souter tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drowned himsel among the nappy.
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes winged their way wi' pleasure;
Kings may be bless'd, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread—
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;

⁹Good-for-nothing. ¹⁰Chattering. ¹¹Babbler.

¹²Every meal-grinding. ¹³Driven.

¹⁴Wizards in the dark. ¹⁵Makes me weep.

¹⁶Foaming new ale. ¹⁷Shoemaker.

Or like the snow falls in the river—
 A moment white, then melts for ever;
 Or like the borealis race,
 That flit ere you can point their place;
 Or like the rainbow's lovely form
 Evanishing amid the storm.
 Nae man can tether time nor tide;
 The hour approaches Tam maun¹ ride;
 That hour, o' night's black arch the key-
 stane,

That dreary hour, he mounts his beast in;
 And sic a night he taks the road in,
 As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
 The rattling show'rs rose on the blast;
 The speedy gleams the darkness swallowed;
 Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bel-
 lowed:

That night, a child might understand,
 The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his gray mare, Meg,
 A better never lifted leg,
 Tam skelpit² on thro' dub³ and mire,
 Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
 Whiles⁴ holding fast his gude blue bonnet;
 Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots son-
 net;⁵

Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
 Lest bogles⁶ catch him unawares.
 Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
 Where ghaists and houlets⁷ nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
 Where in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;⁸
 And past the birks and meikle stane,⁹
 Where drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
 And thro' the whins,¹⁰ and by the cairn,¹¹
 Where hunters fand the murdered bairn;¹²
 And near the thorn, aboon¹³ the well,
 Where Mungo's mither hanged hersel.
 Before him Doon pours all his floods;
 The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
 The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
 Near and more near the thunders roll:
 When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
 Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze;
 Thro' ilka bore¹⁴ the beams were glancing;
 And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!
 What dangers thou canst make us scorn!

Wi' tippenny,¹⁵ we fear nae evil;
 Wi' usquebae,¹⁶ we'll face the devil!
 The swats ae reamed in Tammie's noddle,
 Fair play, he cared na deils a boddle!¹⁷
 But Maggie stood right sair astonished,
 Till, by the heel and hand admonished,
 She ventured forward on the light;
 And, vow! Tam saw an unco¹⁸ sight!

Warlocks and witches in a dance!
 Nae cotillon brent new¹⁹ frae France,
 But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,²⁰
 Put life and mettle in their heels.
 A winnock-bunker²¹ in the east,
 There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast—
 A touzie tyke,²² black, grim, and large!
 To gie them music was his charge:
 He screwed the pipes and gart them skirl,²³
 Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.²⁴

Coffins stood round like open presses,
 That shawed the dead in their last dresses;
 And by some devilish cantraip²⁵ sleight
 Each in its cauld hand held a light,
 By which heroic Tam was able
 To note upon the haly²⁶ table
 A murderer's banes in gibbet-airns;²⁷
 Twa span-lang, wee, unchristened bairns;
 A thief new-cutt'd frae the rape,²⁸
 Wi' his last gasp his gab²⁹ did gape;
 Five tomahawks, wi' blude red rusted;
 Five scymitars, wi' murder crusted;
 A garter, which a babe had strangled;
 A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
 Whom his ain son o' life bereft—
 The gray hairs yet stack to the heft;
 Wi' mair of horrible and awfu',
 Which even to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowred,³⁰ amazed, and curi-
 ous,
 The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:
 The piper loud and louder blew;
 The dancers quick and quicker flew;
 They reeled, they set, they crossed, they
 cleekit,³¹
 Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,³²
 And coost her duddies to the wark,³³
 And linkit at it in her sark!³⁴

¹⁵Whisky. ¹⁷Copper. ¹⁸Wonderful. ¹⁹Brand-new.

²⁰Names of Scottish dances. ²¹Window-seat.

²²Shaggy dog. ²³Made them squeal. ²⁴Ring.

²⁵Magic. ²⁶Holy. ²⁷Bones in gibbet-irons. ²⁸Rope.

²⁹Mouth. ³⁰Stared. ³¹Linked themselves.

³²Till every old woman sweat and steamed.

³³And cast off her clothes to the work.

³⁴And tripped at it in her shirt.

¹Must. ²Clattered. ³Puddle. ⁴Now. ⁵Song.

⁶Bogies. ⁷Ghosts and owls. ⁸Peddler smothered.

⁹Birches and big stone. ¹⁰Furze. ¹¹Pile of stones.

¹²Child. ¹³Above. ¹⁴Every chink. ¹⁵Ale.

Now Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans,¹
 A' plump and strapping in their teens;
 Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,²
 Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linen!³
 Thir breeks⁴ o' mine, my only pair,
 That ance were plush, o' gude blue hair,
 I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies,⁵
 For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies!⁶

But withered beldams, auld and droll,
 Rigwoodie⁷ hags wad spean⁸ a foal,
 Louping and flinging on a crummock,⁹
 I wonder didna turn thy stomach.

But Tam kent¹⁰ what was what fu' braw-
 lie!¹¹

There was ae winsome wench and walie¹²
 That night enlisted in the core,¹³
 Lang after kent on Carrick shore!
 (For mony a beast to dead she shot,
 And perished mony a bonnie boat,
 And shook baith meikle corn and bear,¹⁴
 And kept the country-side in fear.)
 Her cutty¹⁵ sark, o' Paisley harn,¹⁶
 That while a lassie she had worn,
 In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
 It was her best, and she was vauntie.¹⁷
 Ah! little kent thy reverend grannie
 That sark she coft¹⁸ for her wee Nannie
 Wi' twa pund Scots¹⁹ ('twas a' her riches)
 Wad ever graced a dance of witches!

But here my muse her wing maun cour;²⁰
 Sic flights are far beyond her pow'r—
 To sinfi how Nannie lap and flang²¹
 (A souple jade she was, and strang);
 And how Tam stood, like ane bewitched,
 And thought his very e'en enriched;
 Even Satan glowred, and fidget²² fu' fain,
 And hotched²³ and blew wi' might and
 main:

Till first ae caper, syne anither,
 Tam tint²⁴ his reason a' thegither,
 And roars out, "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
 And in an instant all was dark!

And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
 When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke²⁵
 When plundering herds²⁶ assail their byke,²⁷
 As open pussie's mortal foes²⁸
 When, pop! she starts before their nose,
 As eager runs the market-crowd,
 When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud,
 So Maggie runs; the witches follow,
 Wi' mony an eldritch skriech²⁹ and hollow.

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin'!³⁰
 In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin'!
 In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin'!
 Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!

Now do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
 And win the key-stane o' the brig;³¹
 There at them thou thy tail may toss,
 A running stream they darena cross.
 But ere the key-stane she could make,
 The fient³² a tail she had to shake!
 For Nannie, far before the rest,
 Hard upon noble Maggie pressed,
 And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;³³
 But little wist³⁴ she Maggie's mettle!
 Ae spring brought off her master hale,
 But left behind her ain gray tail:
 The carlin clauht³⁵ her by the rump,
 And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
 Each man and mother's son, take heed;
 Whene'er to drink you are inclined,
 Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,
 Think! ye may buy the joys o'er dear;
 Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

YE FLOWERY BANKS O' BONNIE DOON³⁶

YE FLOWERY banks o' bonnie Doon,
 How can ye blume sae fair?
 How can ye chant, ye little birds,
 And I sae fu' o' care?

¹Had these been young women. ²Greasy flannel.

³*I. e.*, fine linen, with 1700 threads to a width.

⁴These breeches. ⁵Hips. ⁶Maidens.

⁷Probably ancient, or lean. ⁸Wean (from disgust).

⁹Leaping and kicking on a staff. ¹⁰Knew.

¹¹Full well. ¹²Choice. ¹³Company.

¹⁴Much wheat and barley. ¹⁵Short. ¹⁶Coarse linen.

¹⁷Proud. ¹⁸Bought.

¹⁹A pound Scots was only about 40 cents.

²⁰Must stoop. ²¹Leaped and kicked. ²²Fidgeted.

²³Jerked. ²⁴Lost.

²⁵Fret. ²⁶Herders of cattle. ²⁷Hive.

²⁸As the hare's mortal foe's begin to bark.

²⁹Unearthly screech.

³⁰Literally, a present from a fair, but the word came to be used ironically (as it is here) for a beating.

³¹Bridge. "It is a well-known fact that witches, or any evil spirits, have no power to follow a poor wight any farther than the middle of the next running stream."
—Burns's note.

³²Devil. ³³Aim. ³⁴Knew. ³⁵Seized.

³⁶Written probably in 1791.

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days,
When my fause luvè was true.

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings beside thy mate;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist! na o' my fate.

Aft hae I rôved by bonnie Doon,
To see the woodbine twine,
And ilka² bird sang o' its love,
And sae did I o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Frae off its thorny tree:
And my fause luvè staw³ my rose,
But left the thorn wi' me.

AE FOND KISS⁴

AE FOND kiss, and then we sever!
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage⁵ thee.
Who shall say that fortune grieves him
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me,
Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,
Naething could resist my Nancy;
But to see her was to love her,
Love but her, and love for ever.
Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met—or never parted—
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka⁶ joy and treasure,
Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure.
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

¹Knew. ²Every. ³Stole. ⁴Written in 1791.

⁵Pledge. ⁶Every.

DUNCAN GRAY⁷

DUNCAN GRAY came here to woo,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
On blithe Yule night⁸ when we were fou,⁹
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Maggie coost¹⁰ her head fu' heigh,
Looked asklent and unco skeigh,¹¹
Gart¹² poor Duncan stand abeigh;¹³
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Duncan fleechèd,¹⁴ and Duncan prayèd;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
Meg was deaf as Ailsa Craig,¹⁵
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Duncan sighèd baith out and in,
Grat¹⁶ his e'en baith bleer't and blin',
Spak o' lowpin o'er a linn;¹⁷
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Time and chance are but a tide,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
Slighted love is sair to bide,¹⁸
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Shall I, like a fool, quoth he,
For a haughty hizzie¹⁹ die?
She may gae to—France for me!
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

How it comes let doctors tell,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
Meg grew sick as he grew hale,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Something in her bosom wrings;
For relief a sigh she brings;
And O, her e'en they spak sic²⁰ things!
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Duncan was a lad o' grace,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
Maggie's was a piteous case,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

⁷Written in 1792. The second or (as Henley and Henderson say) drawing-room set. Of the tune Burns wrote: "*Duncan Gray* is that kind of lighthorse gallop of an air which precludes sentiment. The ludicrous is its ruling feature."

⁸Christmas Eve. ⁹Drunk. ¹⁰Cast.

¹¹Askance and very disdainful. ¹²Made. ¹³Off.

¹⁴Wheeled.

¹⁵A rocky islet in the Firth of Clyde, frequented by screaming sea-fowl.

¹⁶Wept. ¹⁷Leaping over a waterfall.

¹⁸Hard to endure. ¹⁹Young woman. ²⁰Such.

Duncan couldna be her death,
Swelling pity smoores¹ his wrath;
Now they're crouse and cantie² baith!
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

HIGHLAND MARY³

YE BANKS and braes⁴ and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie!⁵
There summer first unfauld⁶ her robes,
And there the longest tarry;
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloomed the gay green birk,⁷
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade
I clasped her to my bosom!
The golden hours on angel wings
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me as light and life
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' mony a vow, and locked embrace,
• Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursel's asunder;
But oh! fell death's untimely frost,
That nipped my flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
I aft have kissed sae fondly!
And closed for aye the sparkling glance,
That dwelt on me sae kindly!
And mold'ring now in silent dust,
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

SCOTS WHA HAE⁸

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victorie.

¹Smothered. ²Brisk and cheerful.

³Written in 1792. Concerning Mary Campbell, the subject of this song, see *To Mary in Heaven*, note 1, above.

⁴Slopes. ⁵Turbid. ⁶Unfold. ⁷Birch.

⁸Written in 1793. There was a tradition that the air *Hey Tutti Taitti* was Robert Bruce's march at

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lour!
See approach proud Edward's power—
Chains and slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or freeman fa'?
Let him follow me!

By oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us do or die!

IS THERE FOR HONEST POVERTY⁹

IS THERE, for honest poverty,
That hangs his head, and a' that?
The coward-slave, we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Our toils obscure, and a' that,
The rank is but the guinea stamp;
The man's the gowd¹⁰ for a' that.

What tho' on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hodden-gray,¹¹ and a' that?
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A man's a man for a' that.

Bannockburn. Burns wrote: "This thought, in my solitary wanderings, roused me to a pitch of enthusiasm on the theme of liberty and independence, which I threw into a kind of Scottish ode, fitted to the air, that one might suppose to be the gallant royal Scot's address to his heroic followers on that eventful morning." The Battle of Bannockburn was fought on 24 June, 1314. The Scots under Bruce won a victory over Edward II and the English which secured the independence of Scotland until the union of the kingdoms in 1603. In the same letter from which the above sentence is quoted Burns also indicated that the French Revolution was in his mind when he was writing the poem.

⁹Written in 1793 or 1794. ¹⁰Gold.

¹¹Coarse gray woolen cloth.

For a' that, and a' that,
 Their tinsel show, and a' that,
 The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
 Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie,¹ ca'd a lord,
 Wha struts, and stares, and a' that;
 Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
 He's but a coof² for a' that:
 For a' that, and a' that,
 His ribband, star, and a' that,
 The man of independent mind,
 He looks and laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
 A marquis, duke, and a' that;
 But an honest man's aboon³ his might,
 Guid faith he mauna fa'⁴ that!
 For a' that, and a' that,
 Their dignities, and a' that,
 The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
 Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
 As come it will for a' that,
 That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
 Shall bear the gree⁵ and a' that;

¹Fellow. ²Fool. ³Above.

⁴Must not lay claim to.

For a' that, and a' that,
 It's comin' yet for a' that,
 That man to man, the world o'er,
 Shall brithers be for a' that.

O, WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST⁶

O, WERT thou in the cauld blast
 On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
 My plaidie to the angry airt,⁷
 I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee.
 Or did misfortune's bitter storms
 Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
 Thy bield⁸ should be my bosom,
 To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
 Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
 The desert were a paradise,
 If thou wert there, if thou wert there.
 Or were I monarch o' the globe,
 Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
 The brightest jewel in my crown
 Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

⁶Have the prize.

⁶Written in 1796, during Burns's last illness, in honor of Jessie Lewars, who did much for him and his family at that time.

⁷Quarter. ⁸Shelter.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850)

Wordsworth was born at Cockermouth in the county of Cumberland on 7 April, 1770. His early life was one of simplicity, almost of poverty, amid picturesque rural surroundings. His mother died when he was eight years old, and his father five years later. He attended the grammar school of Hawkshead, living as a boarder in the village, and thence passed in 1787 to St. John's College, Cambridge, two of his uncles providing the means necessary for his university education. He took his B. A. in 1791. Wordsworth was never a great reader, and he did not distinguish himself as a student. There may even have been a degree of wildness in his life during these years which it is still not usual to associate with the "Daddy Wordsworth"—to use Edward Fitzgerald's phrase—perpetuated by the poet's earlier biographers. It is evident at any rate that, as he himself later said, he "was not for that hour, nor for that place," and that, while his strictly intellectual training was pursued somewhat listlessly at Cambridge, his heart was roused to fresh life in his vacations spent in the northern country known as the lake district and, in the summer of 1790, in a walking tour through France, Switzerland, and northern Italy. After he left Cambridge he spent some months in London and then went to France, where he remained until the beginning of 1793. While he was in France he was in close association with members of the revolutionary party, and at the same time he fell in love with a member of a royalist family, Marie-Anne Vallon, some four or five years his senior, who bore him a daughter in December, 1792. There is reason for believing that Wordsworth later intended to marry the mother of his daughter, but he did not do so. On the other hand, as Professor G. M. Harper has said, "whatever, from a legal point of view may have been the nature of the connection between Wordsworth and Marie-Anne Vallon, it was openly acknowledged and its consequences were honorably endured" (*Wordsworth's French Daughter*, p. 12).

Soon after his return to England in 1793 he published *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*, and presently he became, at least partly by way of reaction from the excesses of the French Revolution, a disciple of William Godwin, a crank who for a short time was seriously regarded as the leader of English liberalism. "Throw aside your books of chemistry," said Wordsworth to a young student, "and read Godwin upon Necessity." Godwin was a necessitarian and an extreme individualist who believed that our faults are induced in us by our environment, and that the doing away with all external compulsions—i.e., with all contracts between individuals and with government itself—would make possible an earthly paradise in which the sole ruler would be the reason of the individual. His *Political Justice* was published in 1793 and his influence over Wordsworth extended until 1797, when it was replaced by that of Coleridge, whom he had met in 1795. In 1797 Wordsworth went to live near Coleridge in Somersetshire. Coleridge was, as has been finely said, "one of those minds which startle other minds out of the *ordinariness* which so easily besets most men, and besets at fitful intervals even genius" (H. W. Garrod, *Wordsworth*, p. 139). It was at the very beginning of Wordsworth's intimacy with Coleridge that he wrung himself free of "that strong disease," as he calls it, of Godwinism, and it was during the years of his close association with Coleridge—that is to say, for about nine years following 1797—that he wrote practically all of his greatest poetry. In 1798 he and Coleridge published *Lyrical Ballads* (the volume contained four poems by Coleridge). In 1798 and 1799 a large part of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth's long autobiographical poem, was written, and it was finished in 1805. In this period the fragment of *The Recluse* was written (1800) and part of *The Excursion*, including the episode concerning Margaret (1799). And at the end of this period was published *Poems in Two Volumes* (1807). This sums up the best of Wordsworth's poetry, and after 1807 he began to settle more and more deeply into that *ordinariness* to which he was, perhaps, naturally more prone than other men of equally great gifts.

Meanwhile Wordsworth had been living with his sister Dorothy, who also exerted a strong influence upon him, since 1795, when he had received a small legacy from Raisley Calvert which had freed him from dependence on his other relatives. In 1798 Wordsworth and Dorothy and Coleridge had gone to spend some time in Germany; and in 1799 the Wordsworths took Dove Cottage, Grasmere, where they remained nine years. In 1802 Wordsworth married Mary Hutchinson. In 1813 he was given a government post, a sinecure, which greatly increased his income and enabled him to move to Rydal Mount, where he remained until his death. In the following year he published *The Excursion*, and in 1815 *The White Doe of Rylstone*, *Laodamia*, and other poems. In 1836-1837 a collected edition of his poems was published, in six volumes. In 1843 he was made poet laureate, in succession to Southey. He died on 23 April, 1850.

In the note concerning his *Ode, Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*, which Wordsworth dictated to Miss Isabella Fenwick, he spoke of a difficulty he had had in childhood in admitting "the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being." This arose, he went on to say, "from a sense of the indomitableness of the Spirit within me," and from this it came about that "I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. At that time I was afraid of such processes. In later periods of life I have deplored, as we have all reason to do, a subjugation of an opposite character. . . . To that dream-like vividness and splendor which invest objects of sight in childhood, every one, I believe, if he would look back, could bear testimony." It is hardly too much to say that this passage contains the key to Wordsworth's poetry. In his youth Wordsworth's animal sensibilities were strong. The life of the eye and ear was more to him than to other men. And while his richest and most vivid experiences came to him through the senses, at the same time they often carried him beyond sense to visions of an eternity not beyond the reach of man. From this Wordsworth inferred the natural goodness of the senses, and thus he was prepared for the influence of Rousseau and the French Revolution. To this faith in the life of the senses he returned after his period of subjection to Godwin, and in this faith much of his great poetry was written. In his great period he also attacked, with Coleridge's help, the question how one was to maintain one's spiritual life as one grew older and the impressions of the senses became less piercingly vivid. To this question he found answers—we may read them in *The Character of the Happy Warrior* and the *Ode to Duty*—but evidently no answer that enabled him to maintain his own life on the exalted level of his great decade.

The *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798 mark, as is usually said, a new epoch in the history of English literature;—they definitely usher in the romantic movement. Among other things it is notable that these poems are largely concerned with the experiences of humble people living in the country and that their style has a simplicity and directness which marks a deliberate break with the artificial poetic diction of the eighteenth century. But the latter characteristic is not really separable from the substance of Wordsworth's poetry. What he wrote came from the depths of the man, and his style when at its best is simply the result of his effort to deal faithfully with his experience.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION OF *LYRICAL BALLADS*¹

THE first Volume of these Poems has already been submitted to general perusal. It was published as an experiment, which, I hoped, might be of some use to ascertain how far, by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation, that sort of pleasure and that quantity of pleasure may be imparted, which a Poet may rationally endeavor to impart.

I had formed no very inaccurate estimate of the probable effect of those Poems: I flattered myself that they who should be pleased with them would read them with more than common pleasure: and, on the other hand, I was well aware, that by those who should dislike them they would be read with more than common dislike. The result has differed from my expectation in this only, that a greater number have been pleased than I ventured to hope I should please.

Several of my Friends are anxious for the success of these Poems, from a belief that, if the views with which they were composed were indeed realized, a class of Poetry would be produced, well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and not unimportant in the quality and in the multiplicity of its moral relations: and on this account they have advised me to prefix a systematic defense of the theory upon which the Poems were written. But I was unwilling to undertake the task, knowing that on this occasion the reader would look coldly upon my arguments, since I might be suspected of having been principally influenced by the selfish and foolish hope of *reasoning* him into an approbation of these particular Poems: and I was still more unwilling to undertake the task, because adequately to display the opinions, and fully to enforce the arguments, would require a space wholly disproportionate to a preface. For, to treat the subject with the clearness and coherence of which it is susceptible, it would be necessary to give a full account of the present state of the public taste in this country, and to determine how far this taste is healthy or depraved; which, again, could not be determined without

¹The second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, with additions, was published in two volumes in 1800. The Preface which was then added was later revised and enlarged, and is here printed in its final form.

pointing out in what manner language and the human mind act and re-act on each other, and without retracing the revolutions, not of literature alone, but likewise of society itself. I have therefore altogether declined to enter regularly upon this defense; yet I am sensible that there would be something like impropriety in abruptly obtruding upon the Public, without a few words of introduction, Poems so materially different from those upon which general approbation is at present bestowed.

It is supposed that by the act of writing in verse an Author makes a formal engagement that he will gratify certain known habits of association; that he not only thus apprises the Reader that certain classes of ideas and expressions will be found in his book, but that others will be carefully excluded. This exponent or symbol held forth by metrical language must in different eras of literature have excited very different expectations: for example, in the age of Catullus, Terence, and Lucretius, and that of Statius or Claudian;¹ and in our own country, in the age of Shakespeare and Beaumont and Fletcher, and that of Donne and Cowley, or Dryden, or Pope. I will not take upon me to determine the exact import of the promise which, by the act of writing in verse, an Author in the present day makes to his reader; but it will undoubtedly appear to many persons that I have not fulfilled the terms of an engagement thus voluntarily contracted. They who have been accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will, no doubt, frequently have to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness: they will look round for poetry, and will be induced to inquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title. I hope, therefore, the reader will not censure me for attempting to state what I have proposed to myself to perform; and also (as far as the limits of a preface will permit) to explain some of the chief reasons which have determined me in the choice of my purpose: that at least he may be spared any unpleasant feeling of disappointment, and that

I myself may be protected from one of the most dishonorable accusations which can be brought against an Author; namely, that of an indolence which prevents him from endeavoring to ascertain what is his duty, or, when his duty is ascertained, prevents him from performing it.

The principal object, then, proposed in these Poems, was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain coloring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because in that condition the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings, and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust), because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than

¹The first three belong to the great period of Latin poetry, the latter two to a later age comparatively barren of high achievement.

that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honor upon themselves and their art in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes and fickle appetites of their own creation.¹

I cannot, however, be insensible to the present outcry against the triviality and meanness, both of thought and language, which some of my contemporaries have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions; and I acknowledge that this defect, where it exists, is more dishonorable to the Writer's own character than false refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend at the same time that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses the Poems in these volumes will be found distinguished at least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy *purpose*. Not that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived, but habits of meditation have, I trust, so prompted and regulated my feelings, that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings will be found to carry along with them a *purpose*. If this opinion be erroneous, I can have little right to the name of a Poet. For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: and though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and as, by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the im-

pulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature, and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the Reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affection strengthened and purified.

It has been said that each of these Poems has a purpose. Another circumstance must be mentioned which distinguishes these Poems from the popular Poetry of the day; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling.

A sense of false modesty shall not prevent me from asserting that the Reader's attention is pointed to this mark of distinction, far less for the sake of these particular Poems than from the general importance of the subject. The subject is indeed important! For the human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know, that one being is elevated above another in proportion as he possesses this capability. It has therefore appeared to me, that to endeavor to produce or enlarge this capability is one of the best services in which, at any period, a Writer can be engaged; but this service, excellent at all times, is especially so at the present day. For a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and, unfitting it for all voluntary exertion, to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse.—When I think

¹It is worth while here to observe that the affecting parts of Chaucer are almost always expressed in language pure and universally intelligible even to this day (Wordsworth's note).

upon this degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation, I am almost ashamed to have spoken of the feeble endeavor made in these volumes to counteract it; and, reflecting upon the magnitude of the general evil, I should be oppressed with no dishonorable melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it, which are equally inherent and indestructible; and were there not added to this impression a belief that the time is approaching when the evil will be systematically opposed by men of greater powers, and with far more distinguished success.

Having dwelt thus long on the subjects and aim of these Poems, I shall request the Reader's permission to apprise him of a few circumstances relating to their *style*, in order, among other reasons, that he may not censure me for not having performed what I never attempted. The Reader will find that personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes, and are utterly rejected as an ordinary device to elevate the style and raise it above prose. My purpose was to imitate, and, as far as is possible, to adopt the very language of men; and assuredly such personifications do not make any natural or regular part of that language. They are, indeed, a figure of speech occasionally prompted by passion, and I have made use of them as such; but have endeavored utterly to reject them as a mechanical device of style, or as a family language which Writers in meter seem to lay claim to by prescription. I have wished to keep the Reader in the company of flesh and blood, persuaded that by so doing I shall interest him. Others who pursue a different track will interest him likewise; I do not interfere with their claim, but wish to prefer a claim of my own. There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction; as much pains has been taken to avoid it as is ordinarily taken to produce it; this has been done for the reason already alleged, to bring my language near to the language of men; and further, because the pleasure which I have proposed to myself to impart is of a kind very different from that which is supposed by many persons to be the

proper object of poetry. Without being culpably particular, I do not know how to give my Reader a more exact notion of the style in which it was my wish and intention to write, than by informing him that I have at all times endeavored to look steadily at my subject; consequently there is, I hope, in these Poems little falsehood of description, and my ideas are expressed in language fitted to their respective importance. Something must have been gained by this practice, as it is friendly to one property of all good poetry, namely, good sense: but it has necessarily cut me off from a large portion of phrases and figures of speech which from father to son have long been regarded as the common inheritance of Poets. I have also thought it expedient to restrict myself still further, having abstained from the use of many expressions, in themselves proper and beautiful, but which have been foolishly repeated by bad Poets, till such feelings of disgust are connected with them as it is scarcely possible by any art of association to overpower.

If in a poem there should be found a series of lines, or even a single line, in which the language, though naturally arranged, and according to the strict laws of meter, does not differ from that of prose, there is a numerous class of critics, who, when they stumble upon these prosaisms, as they call them, imagine that they have made a notable discovery, and exult over the Poet as over a man ignorant of his own profession. Now these men would establish a canon of criticism which the Reader will conclude he must utterly reject, if he wishes to be pleased with these volumes. And it would be a most easy task to prove to him that not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the meter, in no respect differ from that of good prose, but likewise that some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose when prose is well written. The truth of this assertion might be demonstrated by innumerable passages from almost all the poetical writings, even of Milton himself. To illustrate the subject in a general manner, I will here adduce a short composition of Gray, who was at the head of those who, by

their reasonings, have attempted to widen the space of separation betwixt Prose and Metrical composition, and was more than any other man curiously elaborate in the structure of his own poetic diction.

"In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
And reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire;
The birds in vain their amorous descant join,
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire.
These ears, alas! for other notes repine;
A different object do these eyes require;
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire;
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to happier
men;
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
To warm their little loves the birds complain.
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
And weep the more because I weep in vain."¹

It will easily be perceived, that the only part of this Sonnet which is of any value is the lines printed in Italics; it is equally obvious that, except in the rhyme and in the use of the single word "fruitless" for fruitlessly, which is so far a defect, the language of these lines does in no respect differ from that of prose.

By the foregoing quotation it has been shown that the language of Prose may yet be well adapted to Poetry; and it was previously asserted that a large portion of the language of every good poem can in no respect differ from that of good Prose. We will go further. It may be safely affirmed that there neither is, nor can be, any *essential* difference between the language of prose and metrical composition. We are fond of tracing the resemblance between Poetry and Painting, and, accordingly, we call them Sisters: but where shall we find bonds of connection sufficiently strict to typify the affinity betwixt metrical and prose composition? They both speak by and to the same organs; the bodies in which both of them are clothed may be said to be of the same substance, their affections are kindred, and almost identical, not necessarily differing even in degree; Poetry² sheds no tears "such as

Angels weep," but natural and human tears. she can boast of no celestial ichor³ that distinguishes her vital juices from those of Prose; the same human blood circulates through the veins of them both.

If it be affirmed that rhyme and metrical arrangement of themselves constitute a distinction which overturns what has just been said on the strict affinity of metrical language with that of Prose, and paves the way for other artificial distinctions which the mind voluntarily admits, I answer that the language of such Poetry as is here recommended is, as far as is possible, a selection of the language really spoken by men; that this selection, wherever it is made with true taste and feeling, will of itself form a distinction far greater than would at first be imagined, and will entirely separate the composition from the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life; and, if meter be superadded thereto, I believe that a dissimilitude will be produced altogether sufficient for the gratification of a rational mind. What other distinction would we have? Whence is it to come? And where is it to exist? Not, surely, where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters: it cannot be necessary here, either for elevation of style, or any of its supposed ornaments; for, if the Poet's subject be judiciously chosen, it will naturally, and upon fit occasion, lead him to passions, the language of which, if selected truly and judiciously, must necessarily be dignified and variegated, and alive with metaphors and figures. I forbear to speak of an incongruity which would shock the intelligent Reader, should the Poet interweave any foreign splendor of his own with that which the passion naturally suggests: it is sufficient to say that such addition is unnecessary. And, surely, it is more probable that those passages, which with propriety abound with metaphors and figures, will have their due effect if, upon other occasions where the

synonymous with metrical composition. But much confusion has been introduced into criticism by this contradistinction of Poetry and Prose, instead of the more philosophical one of Poetry and Matter of Fact, or Science. The only strict antithesis to Prose is Meter; nor is this, in truth, a *strict* antithesis, because lines and passages of meter so naturally occur in writing prose, that it would be scarcely possible to avoid them, even were it desirable (Wordsworth's note).

³An ethereal fluid that flows in the veins of the gods.

¹Gray's *Sonnet on the Death of Richard West*.

²I here use the word "Poetry" (though against my own judgment) as opposed to the word Prose, and

passions are of a milder character, the style also be subdued and temperate.

But, as the pleasure which I hope to give by the Poems now presented to the Reader must depend entirely on just notions upon this subject, and as it is in itself of high importance to our taste and moral feelings, I cannot content myself with these detached remarks. And if, in what I am about to say, it shall appear to some that my labor is unnecessary, and that I am like a man fighting a battle without enemies, such persons may be reminded that, whatever be the language outwardly holden by men, a practical faith in the opinions which I am wishing to establish is almost unknown. If my conclusions are admitted, and carried as far as they must be carried if admitted at all, our judgments concerning the works of the greatest Poets, both ancient and modern, will be far different from what they are at present, both when we praise and when we censure; and our moral feelings influencing and influenced by these judgments will, I believe, be corrected and purified.

*Taking up the subject, then, upon general grounds, let me ask, what is meant by the word Poet? What is a Poet? To whom does he address himself? And what language is to be expected from him?—He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than any other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to

feel in themselves:—whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.

But whatever portion of this faculty we may suppose even the greatest Poet to possess, there cannot be a doubt that the language which it will suggest to him must often, in liveliness and truth, fall short of that which is uttered by men in real life under the actual pressure of those passions, certain shadows of which the Poet thus produces, or feels to be produced, in himself.

However exalted a notion we would wish to cherish of the character of a Poet, it is obvious that, while he describes and imitates passions, his employment is in some degree mechanical compared with the freedom and power of real and substantial action and suffering. So that it will be the wish of the Poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, nay, for short spaces of time, perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs; modifying only the language which is thus suggested to him by a consideration that he describes for a particular purpose, that of giving pleasure. Here, then, he will apply the principle of selection which has been already insisted upon. He will depend upon this for removing what would otherwise be painful or disgusting in the passion; he will feel that there is no necessity to trick out or to elevate nature; and the more industriously he applies this principle the deeper will be his faith that no words, which *his* fancy or imagination can suggest, will be to be compared with those which are the emanations of reality and truth.

But it may be said by those who do not object to the general spirit of these remarks, that, as it is impossible for the Poet to produce upon all occasions language as exquisitely fitted for the passion as that which the real passion itself suggests, it is proper that he should consider himself as in the situation of a translator, who does not scruple to substitute excellences of another kind for those which are unattainable by him; and endeavors occasionally to surpass his orig-

inal, in order to make some amends for the general inferiority to which he feels he must submit. But this would be to encourage idleness and unmanly despair. Further, it is the language of men who speak of what they do not understand; who talk of Poetry, as of a matter of amusement and idle pleasure; who will converse with us as gravely about a *taste* for Poetry, as they express it, as if it were a thing as indifferent as a taste for rope-dancing, or Frontinac or Sherry. Aristotle, I have been told, has said that Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing: it is so: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony, which gives competence and confidence to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. Poetry is the image of man and nature. The obstacles which stand in the way of the fidelity of the Biographer and Historian, and of their consequent utility, are incalculably greater than those which are to be encountered by the Poet who comprehends the dignity of his art. The Poet writes under one restriction only, namely, the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human Being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher, but as a Man. Except this one restriction, there is no object standing between the Poet and the image of things; between this, and the Biographer and Historian, there are a thousand.

Nor let this necessity of producing immediate pleasure be considered as a degradation of the Poet's art. It is far otherwise. It is an acknowledgment of the beauty of the universe, an acknowledgment the more sincere because not formal, but indirect; it is a task light and easy to him who looks at the world in the spirit of love: further, it is a homage paid to the native and naked dignity of man, to the grand elementary principle of pleasure, by which he knows, and feels, and lives, and moves. We have no sympathy but what is propagated by pleasure: I would not be misunderstood; but wherever we sympathize with pain, it will be found that the sympathy is produced and carried on by subtle combinations with pleasure. We

have no knowledge, that is, no general principles drawn from the contemplation of particular facts, but what has been built up by pleasure, and exists in us by pleasure alone. The Man of science, the Chemist and Mathematician, whatever difficulties and disgusts they may have had to struggle with, know and feel this. However painful may be the objects with which the Anatomist's knowledge is connected, he feels that his knowledge is pleasure; and where he has no pleasure he has no knowledge. What then does the Poet? He considers man and the objects that surround him as acting and reacting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure; he considers man in his own nature and in his ordinary life as contemplating this with a certain quantity of immediate knowledge, with certain convictions, intuitions, and deductions, which from habit acquire the quality of intuitions; he considers him as looking upon this complex scene of ideas and sensations, and finding everywhere objects that immediately excite in him sympathies which, from the necessities of his nature, are accompanied by an overbalance of enjoyment.

To this knowledge which all men carry about with them, and to these sympathies in which, without any other discipline than that of our daily life, we are fitted to take delight, the Poet principally directs his attention. He considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature. And thus the Poet, prompted by this feeling of pleasure, which accompanies him through the whole course of his studies, converses with general nature, with affections akin to those which, through labor and length of time, the Man of science has raised up in himself, by conversing with those particular parts of nature which are the objects of his studies. The knowledge both of the Poet and the Man of science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and unalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition, slow to come to us, and by no habitual and direct sympathy connecting us with our fellow-beings. The Man of science seeks truth as

a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science. Emphatically may it be said of the Poet, as Shakespeare hath said of man, "that he looks before and after."¹ He is the rock of defense for human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs: in spite of things silently gone out of mind, and things violently destroyed; the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth and over all time. The objects of the Poet's thoughts are everywhere; though the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favorite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge—it is as immortal as the heart of man. If the labors of Men of science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the Poet will sleep then no more than at present; he will be ready to follow the steps of the Man of science, not only in those general indirect effects, but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the science itself. The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the Poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of these respective sciences shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings. If the time should ever come when what is now called science, thus familiarized to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the Poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the Being thus produced

as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man.—It is not, then, to be supposed that any one, who holds that sublime notion of Poetry which I have attempted to convey, will break in upon the sanctity and truth of his pictures by transitory and accidental ornaments, and endeavor to excite admiration of himself by arts, the necessity of which must manifestly depend upon the assumed meanness of his subject.

What has been thus far said applies to Poetry in general, but especially to those parts of compositions where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters; and upon this point it appears to authorize the conclusion that there are few persons of good sense who would not allow that the dramatic parts of composition are defective in proportion as they deviate from the real language of nature, and are colored by a diction of the Poet's own, either peculiar to him as an individual Poet or belonging simply to Poets in general; to a body of men who, from the circumstance of their compositions being in meter, it is expected will employ a particular language.

It is not, then, in the dramatic parts of composition that we look for this distinction of language; but still it may be proper and necessary where the Poet speaks to us in his own person and character. To this I answer by referring the Reader to the description before given of a Poet. Among the qualities there enumerated as principally conducing to form a Poet, is implied nothing differing in kind from other men, but only in degree. The sum of what was said is, that the Poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner. But these passions and thoughts and feelings are the general passions and thoughts and feelings of men. And with what are they connected? Undoubtedly with our moral sentiments and animal sensations, and with the causes which excite these; with the operations of the elements, and the appearances of the visible universe; with storm and sunshine, with the revolutions of the seasons, with cold and heat, with loss of friends and kindred, with injuries and resentments, gratitude and hope, with fear and sorrow. These,

¹*Hamlet*, IV, iv, 37.

and the like, are the sensations and objects which the Poet describes, as they are the sensations of other men and the objects which interest them. The Poet thinks and feels in the spirit of human passions. How, then, can his language differ in any material degree from that of all other men who feel vividly and see clearly? It might be *proved* that it is impossible. But supposing that this were not the case, the Poet might then be allowed to use a peculiar language when expressing his feelings for his own gratification, or that of men like himself. But Poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men. Unless, therefore, we are advocates for that admiration which subsists upon ignorance, and that pleasure which arises from hearing what we do not understand, the Poet must descend from this supposed height; and, in order to excite rational sympathy, he must express himself as other men express themselves. To this it may be added, that while he is only selecting from the real language of men, or, which amounts to the same thing, composing accurately in the spirit of such selection, he is treading upon safe ground, and we know what we are to expect from him. Our feelings are the same with respect to meter; for, as it may be proper to remind the Reader, the distinction of meter is regular and uniform, and not, like that which is produced by what is usually called "poetic diction," arbitrary, and subject to infinite caprices, upon which no calculation whatever can be made. In the one case, the Reader is utterly at the mercy of the Poet, respecting what imagery or diction he may choose to connect with the passion; whereas, in the other, the meter obeys certain laws, to which the Poet and Reader both willingly submit because they are certain, and because no interference is made by them with the passion but such as the concurring testimony of ages has shown to heighten and improve the pleasure which co-exists with it.

It will now be proper to answer an obvious question, namely, Why, professing these opinions, have I written in verse? To this, in addition to such answer as is included in what has been already said, I reply, in the first place, Because, however I may have restricted myself, there is still left open to me what confessedly constitutes the most valuable object of all writing, whether in prose

or verse; the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations, and the entire world of nature before me—to supply endless combinations of forms and imagery. Now, supposing for a moment that whatever is interesting in these objects may be as vividly described in prose, why should I be condemned for attempting to superadd to such description the charm which, by the consent of all nations, is acknowledged to exist in metrical language? To this, by such as are yet unconvinced, it may be answered that a very small part of the pleasure given by Poetry depends upon the meter, and that it is injudicious to write in meter, unless it be accompanied with the other artificial distinctions of style with which meter is usually accompanied, and that, by such deviation, more will be lost from the shock which will thereby be given to the Reader's associations than will be counterbalanced by any pleasure which he can derive from the general power of numbers. In answer to those who still contend for the necessity of accompanying meter with certain appropriate colors of style in order to the accomplishment of its appropriate end, and who also, in my opinion, greatly underrate the power of meter in itself, it might, perhaps, as far as relates to these Volumes, have been almost sufficient to observe, that poems are extant, written upon more humble subjects, and in a still more naked and simple style, which have continued to give pleasure from generation to generation. Now, if nakedness and simplicity be a defect, the fact here mentioned affords a strong presumption that poems somewhat less naked and simple are capable of affording pleasure at the present day; and, what I wished *chiefly* to attempt, at present, was to justify myself for having written under the impression of this belief.

But various causes might be pointed out why, when the style is manly, and the subject of some importance, words metrically arranged will long continue to impart such a pleasure to mankind as he who proves the extent of that pleasure will be desirous to impart. The end of poetry is to produce excitement in co-existence with an overbalance of pleasure; but, by the supposition, excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind; ideas and feelings do not, in

that state, succeed each other in accustomed order. If the words, however, by which this excitement is produced be in themselves powerful, or the images and feelings have an undue proportion of pain connected with them, there is some danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper bounds. Now the co-presence of something regular, something to which the mind has been accustomed in various moods and in a less excited state, cannot but have great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion by an intertexture of ordinary feeling, and of feeling not strictly and necessarily connected with the passion. This is unquestionably true; and hence, though the opinion will at first appear paradoxical, from the tendency of meter to divest language, in a certain degree, of its reality, and thus to throw a sort of half-consciousness of unsubstantial existence over the whole composition, there can be little doubt but that more pathetic situations and sentiments, that is, those which have a greater proportion of pain connected with them, may be endured in metrical composition, especially in rhyme, than in prose. The meter of the old ballads is very artless, yet they contain many passages which would illustrate this opinion; and, I hope, if the following poems be attentively perused, similar instances will be found in them. This opinion may be further illustrated by appealing to the Reader's own experience of the reluctance with which he comes to the reperusal of the distressful parts of *Clarissa Harlowe*, or the *Gamester*;¹ while Shakespeare's writings, in the most pathetic scenes, never act upon us, as pathetic, beyond the bounds of pleasure—an effect which, in a much greater degree than might at first be imagined, is to be ascribed to small, but continual and regular impulses of pleasurable surprise from the metrical arrangement.—On the other hand (what it must be allowed will much more frequently happen), if the Poet's words should be incommensurate with the passion, and inadequate to raise the Reader to a height of desirable excitement, then (unless the Poet's choice of his meter has been grossly injudicious), in the feelings of pleasure which the Reader has

been accustomed to connect with meter in general, and in the feeling, whether cheerful or melancholy, which he has been accustomed to connect with that particular movement of meter, there will be found something which will greatly contribute to impart passion to the words, and to effect the complex end which the Poet proposes to himself.

If I had undertaken a *systematic* defense of the theory here maintained, it would have been my duty to develop the various causes upon which the pleasure received from metrical language depends. Among the chief of these causes is to be reckoned a principle which must be well known to those who have made any of the Arts the object of accurate reflection; namely, the pleasure which the mind derives from the perception of similitude in dissimilitude. This principle is the great spring of the activity of our minds, and their chief feeder. From this principle the direction of the sexual appetite, and all the passions connected with it, take their origin: it is the life of our ordinary conversation; and upon the accuracy with which similitude in dissimilitude, and dissimilitude in similitude, are perceived, depend our taste and our moral feelings. It would not be a useless employment to apply this principle to the consideration of meter, and to show that meter is hence enabled to afford much pleasure, and to point out in what manner that pleasure is produced. But my limits will not permit me to enter upon this subject, and I must content myself with a general summary.

I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity; the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of re-action, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on; but the emotion, of whatever kind, and in whatever degree, from various causes, is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will, upon the whole, be in a state of enjoyment. If Nature be thus cautious to preserve in a

¹The former a novel by Samuel Richardson, published in 1748; the latter a tragedy by Edward Moore, published in 1753.

state of enjoyment a being so employed, the Poet ought to profit by the lesson held forth to him, and ought especially to take care that, whatever passions he communicates to his Reader, those passions, if his Reader's mind be sound and vigorous, should always be accompanied with an over-balance of pleasure. Now the music of harmonious metrical language, the sense of difficulty overcome, and the blind association of pleasure which has been previously received from works of rhyme or meter of the same or similar construction, an indistinct perception perpetually renewed of language closely resembling that of real life, and yet, in the circumstance of meter, differing from it so widely—all these imperceptibly make up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling always found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions. This effect is always produced in pathetic and impassioned poetry; while, in lighter compositions, the ease and gracefulness with which the Poet manages his numbers are themselves confessedly a principal source of the gratification of the Reader. All that it is *necessary* to say, however, upon this subject, may be effected by affirming, what few persons will deny, that of two descriptions, either of passions, manners, or characters, each of them equally well executed, the one in prose and the other in verse, the verse will be read a hundred times where the prose is read once.

Having thus explained a few of my reasons for writing in verse, and why I have chosen subjects from common life, and endeavored to bring my language near to the real language of men, if I have been too minute in pleading my own cause, I have at the same time been treating a subject of general interest; and for this reason a few words shall be added with reference solely to these particular poems, and to some defects which will probably be found in them. I am sensible that my associations must have sometimes been particular instead of general, and that, consequently, giving to things a false importance, I may have sometimes written upon unworthy subjects; but I am less apprehensive on this account, than that my language may frequently have suffered from those arbitrary connections of feelings

and ideas with particular words and phrases from which no man can altogether protect himself. Hence I have no doubt that, in some instances, feelings, even of the ludicrous, may be given to my Readers by expressions which appeared to me tender and pathetic. Such faulty expressions, were I convinced they were faulty at present, and that they must necessarily continue to be so, I would willingly take all reasonable pains to correct. But it is dangerous to make these alterations on the simple authority of a few individuals, or even of certain classes of men; for where the understanding of an author is not convinced, or his feelings altered, this cannot be done without great injury to himself: for his own feelings are his stay and support; and, if he set them aside in one instance, he may be induced to repeat this act till his mind shall lose all confidence in itself, and become utterly debilitated. To this it may be added that the critic ought never to forget that he is himself exposed to the same errors as the Poet, and, perhaps, in a much greater degree: for there can be no presumption in saying of most readers that it is not probable they will be so well acquainted with the various stages of meaning through which words have passed, or with the fickleness or stability of the relations of particular ideas to each other; and, above all, since they are so much less interested in the subject, they may decide lightly and carelessly.

Long as the reader has been detained, I hope he will permit me to caution him against a mode of false criticism which has been applied to poetry, in which the language closely resembles that of life and nature. Such verses have been triumphed over in parodies, of which Dr. Johnson's stanza is a fair specimen:—

“I put my hat upon my head,
And walked into the Strand,
And there I met another man
Whose hat was in his hand.”

Immediately under these lines let us place one of the most justly-admired stanzas of the *Babes in the Wood*.

“These pretty Babes with hand in hand
Went wandering up and down;
But never more they saw the Man
Approaching from the Town.”

In both these stanzas the words, and the order of the words, in no respect differ from the most unimpassioned conversation. There are words in both, for example, "the Strand," and "the Town," connected with none but the most familiar ideas; yet the one stanza we admit as admirable, and the other as a fair example of the superlatively contemptible. Whence arises this difference? Not from the meter, not from the language, not from the order of the words; but the *matter* expressed in Dr. Johnson's stanza is contemptible. The proper method of treating trivial and simple verses, to which Dr. Johnson's stanza would be a fair parallelism, is not to say, this is a bad kind of poetry, or, this is not poetry; but, this wants sense; it is neither interesting in itself, nor can lead to anything interesting; the images neither originate in that sane state of feeling which arises out of thought, nor can excite thought or feeling in the Reader. This is the only sensible manner of dealing with such verses. Why trouble yourself about the species till you have previously decided upon the genus? Why take pains to prove that an ape is not a Newton, when it is self-evident that he is not a man?

One request I must make of my Reader, which is, that in judging these Poems he would decide by his own feelings genuinely, and not by reflection upon what will probably be the judgment of others. How common is it to hear a person say, I myself do not object to this style of composition, or this or that expression, but to such and such classes of people it will appear mean or ludicrous! This mode of criticism, so destructive of all sound unadulterated judgment, is almost universal: let the Reader then abide, independently, by his own feelings, and, if he finds himself affected, let him not suffer such conjectures to interfere with his pleasure.

If an Author, by any single composition, has impressed us with respect for his talents, it is useful to consider this as affording a presumption that on other occasions where we have been displeased he, nevertheless, may not have written ill or absurdly; and further, to give him so much credit for this one composition as may induce us to review what has displeased us with more care than we should otherwise have bestowed upon it.

This is not only an act of justice, but, in our decisions upon poetry especially, may conduce, in a high degree, to the improvement of our own taste: for an *accurate* taste in poetry, and in all the other arts, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an *acquired* talent, which can only be produced by thought and a long-continued intercourse with the best models of composition. This is mentioned, not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most inexperienced Reader from judging for himself (I have already said that I wish him to judge for himself), but merely to temper the rashness of decision, and to suggest that, if Poetry be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgment may be erroneous; and that, in many cases, it necessarily will be so.

Nothing would, I know, have so effectually contributed to further the end which I have in view, as to have shown of what kind the pleasure is, and how that pleasure is produced, which is confessedly produced by metrical composition essentially different from that which I have here endeavored to recommend: for the Reader will say that he has been pleased by such composition; and what more can be done for him? The power of any art is limited; and he will suspect that, if it be proposed to furnish him with new friends, that can be only upon condition of his abandoning his old friends. Besides, as I have said, the Reader is himself conscious of the pleasure which he has received from such composition, composition to which he has peculiarly attached the endearing name of Poetry; and all men feel an habitual gratitude, and something of an honorable bigotry, for the objects which have long continued to please them: we not only wish to be pleased, but to be pleased in that particular way in which we have been accustomed to be pleased. There is in these feelings enough to resist a host of arguments; and I should be the less able to combat them successfully, as I am willing to allow that, in order entirely to enjoy the Poetry which I am recommending, it would be necessary to give up much of what is ordinarily enjoyed. But would my limits have permitted me to point out how this pleasure is produced, many obstacles might have been removed, and the Reader assisted in perceiving that the powers of

language are not so limited as he may suppose; and that it is possible for poetry to give other enjoyments, of a purer, more lasting, and more exquisite nature. This part of the subject has not been altogether neglected, but it has not been so much my present aim to prove that the interest excited by some other kinds of poetry is less vivid, and less worthy of the nobler powers of the mind, as to offer reasons for presuming that if my purpose were fulfilled, a species of poetry would be produced which is genuine poetry; in its nature well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and likewise important in the multiplicity and quality of its moral relations.

From what has been said, and from a perusal of the Poems, the Reader will be able clearly to perceive the object which I had in view: he will determine how far it has been attained, and, what is a much more important question, whether it be worth attaining: and upon the decision of these two questions will rest my claim to the approbation of the Public.

LINES

LEFT UPON A SEAT IN A YEW-TREE, WHICH
STANDS NEAR THE LAKE OF ESTHWAITE,
ON A DESOLATE PART OF THE SHORE,
COMMANDING A BEAUTIFUL PROSPECT¹

NAY, Traveler! rest. This lonely Yew-tree
stands

Far from all human dwelling: what if here
No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant
herb?

What if the bee love not these barren boughs?
Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling
waves,

That break against the shore, shall lull thy
mind

By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.

Who he was

That piled these stones and with the mossy
sod

First covered, and here taught this aged
Tree

With its dark arms to form a circling bower,
I well remember.—He was one who owned
No common soul. In youth by science
nursed,

And led by nature into a wild scene
Of lofty hopes, he to the world went forth
A favored Being, knowing no desire
Which genius did not hallow; 'gainst the
taint

Of dissolute tongues, and jealousy, and
hate,

And scorn,—against all enemies prepared,
All but neglect. The world, for so it thought,
Owed him no service; wherefore he at once
With indignation turned himself away,
And with the food of pride sustained his soul
In solitude.—Stranger! these gloomy boughs
Had charms for him; and here he loved to sit,
His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper:
And on these barren rocks, with fern and
heath,

And juniper and thistle, sprinkled o'er,
Fixing his downcast eye, he many an hour
A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here
An emblem of his own unfruitful life:
And, lifting up his head, he then would gaze
On the more distant scene,—how lovely 'tis
Thou seest,—and he would gaze till it be-
came

Far lovelier, and his heart could not sustain
The beauty, still more beauteous! Nor,
that time,

When nature had subdued him to herself,
Would he forget those Beings to whose
minds,

Warm from the labors of benevolence,
The world, and human life, appeared a scene
Of kindred loveliness: then he would sigh,
Inly disturbed, to think that others felt
What he must never feel: and so, lost Man!
On visionary views would fancy feed,
Till his eye streamed with tears. In this
deep vale

He died,—this seat his only monument.

If Thou be one whose heart the holy forms
Of young imagination have kept pure,
Stranger! henceforth be warned; and know
that pride,

Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness; that he who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he has never used; that thought with
him

Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
Is ever on himself doth look on one,
The least of Nature's works, one who might
move

¹Begun in 1787, completed in 1795, published in 1798.

The wise man to that scorn which wisdom
holds
Unlawful, ever. O be wiser, Thou!
Instructed that true knowledge leads to
love;
True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of heart.

WE ARE SEVEN¹

—A SIMPLE Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage Girl:
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad:
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
—Her beauty made me glad.

"Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
How many may you be?"
"How many? Seven in all," she said,
And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they? I pray you tell."
She answered, "Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

"Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven!—I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be."

Then did the little Maid reply,
"Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree."

"You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church-yard laid,
Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be seen,"
The little Maid replied,
"Twelve steps or more from my mother's
door,
And they are side by side.

"My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

"And often after sunset, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

"The first that died was sister Jane;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.

"So in the church-yard she was laid;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

"And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side."

"How many are you, then," said I,
"If they two are in heaven?"
Quick was the little Maid's reply,
"O Master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!"
'T was throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

¹Composed in 1798, published in 1800.

ANECDOTE FOR FATHERS¹

I HAVE a boy of five years old;
His face is fair and fresh to see;
His limbs are cast in beauty's mold,
And dearly he loves me.

One morn we strolled on our dry walk,
Our quiet home all full in view,
And held such intermitted talk
As we are wont to do.

My thoughts on former pleasures ran;
I thought of Kilve's delightful shore,
Our pleasant home when spring began,
A long, long year before.

A day it was when I could bear
Some fond regrets to entertain;
With so much happiness to spare,
I could not feel a pain.

The green earth echoed to the feet
Of lambs that bounded through the glade,
From shade to sunshine, and as fleet
From sunshine back to shade.

Birds warbled round me—and each trace
Of inward sadness had its charm;
Kilve, thought I, was a favored place,
And so is Liswyn farm.

My boy beside me tripped, so slim
And graceful in his rustic dress!
And, as we talked, I questioned him,
In very idleness.

"Now tell me, had you rather be,"
I said, and took him by the arm,
"On Kilve's smooth shore, by the green sea,
Or here at Liswyn farm?"

In careless mood he looked at me,
While still I held him by the arm,
And said, "At Kilve I'd rather be
Than here at Liswyn farm."

"Now, little Edward, say why so:
My little Edward, tell me why."—
"I cannot tell, I do not know."—
"Why, this is strange," said I;

"For here are woods, hills smooth and warm:
There surely must some reason be
Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm
For Kilve by the green sea."

At this my boy hung down his head,
He blushed with shame, nor made reply;
And three times to the child I said,
"Why, Edward, tell me why?"

His head he raised—there was in sight,
It caught his eye, he saw it plain—
Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
A broad and gilded vane.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock,
And eased his mind with this reply:
"At Kilve there was no weather-cock;
And that's the reason why."

O dearest, dearest boy! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn.

GOODY BLAKE AND HARRY GILL¹

A TRUE STORY

OH! WHAT'S the matter? what's the matter?
What is't that ails young Harry Gill?
That evermore his teeth they chatter,
Chatter, chatter, chatter still!
Of waistcoats Harry has no lack,
Good duffel² gray, and flannel fine;
He has a blanket on his back,
And coats enough to smother nine.

In March, December, and in July,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill;
The neighbors tell, and tell you truly,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
At night, at morning, and at noon,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill;
Beneath the sun, beneath the moon,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still!

Young Harry was a lusty drover,
And who so stout of limb as he?
His cheeks were red as ruddy clover;
His voice was like the voice of three.

¹Written and published in 1798.

¹Written and published in 1798.

²Coarse woolen cloth with thick nap.

Old Goody Blake was old and poor;
 Ill fed she was, and thinly clad;
 And any man who passed her door
 Might see how poor was a hut she had.

All day she spun in her poor dwelling;
 And then her three hours' work at night,
 Alas! 'twas hardly worth the telling,
 It would not pay for candle-light.
 Remote from sheltered village-green,
 On a hill's northern side she dwelt,
 Where from sea-blasts the hawthorns lean,
 And hoary dews are slow to melt.

By the same fire to boil their pottage,
 Two poor old Dames, as I have known,
 Will often live in one small cottage;
 But she, poor Woman! housed alone.
 'Twas well enough when summer came,
 The long, warm, lightsome summer-day
 Then at her door the *canty*¹ Dame
 Would sit, as any linnet, gay.

But when the ice our streams did fetter,
 Oh then how her old bones would shake!
 You would have said, if you had met her,
 'Twas a hard time for Goody Blake.
 Her evenings then were dull and dead:
 Sad case it was, as you may think,
 For very cold to go to bed,
 And then for cold not sleep a wink.

O joy for her! whene'er in winter
 The winds at night had made a rout;
 And scattered many a lusty splinter
 And many a rotten bough about.
 Yet never had she, well or sick,
 As every man who knew her says,
 A pile beforehand, turf or stick,
 Enough to warm her for three days.

Now, when the frost was past enduring,
 And made her poor old bones to ache,
 Could any thing be more alluring
 Than an old hedge to Goody Blake?
 And, now and then, it must be said,
 When her old bones were cold and chill,
 She left her fire, or left her bed,
 To seek the hedge of Harry Gill.

Now Harry he had long suspected
 This trespass of old Goody Blake;
 And vowed that she should be detected—
 That he on her would vengeance take.

And oft from his warm fire he'd go,
 And to the fields his road would take;
 And there, at night, in frost and snow,
 He watched to seize old Goody Blake.

And once, behind a rick of barley,
 Thus looking out did Harry stand:
 The moon was full and shining clearly,
 And crisp with frost the stubble land.
 —He hears a noise—he's all awake—
 Again?—on tip-toe down the hill
 He softly creeps—'tis Goody Blake;
 She's at the hedge of Harry Gill!

Right glad was he when he beheld her:
 Stick after stick did Goody pull:
 He stood behind a bush of elder,
 Till she had filled her apron full.
 When with her load she turned about,
 The by-way back again to take;
 He started forward, with a shout,
 And sprang upon poor Goody Blake.

And fiercely by the arm he took her,
 And by the arm he held her fast,
 And fiercely by the arm he shook her,
 And cried, "I've caught you then at last!"
 Then Goody, who had nothing said,
 Her bundle from her lap let fall;
 And, kneeling on the sticks, she prayed
 To God that is the judge of all.

She prayed, her withered hand uprearing,
 While Harry held her by the arm—
 "God! who art never out of hearing,
 O may he never more be warm!"
 The cold, cold moon above her head,
 Thus on her knees did Goody pray;
 Young Harry heard what she had said:
 And icy cold he turned away.

He went complaining all the morrow
 That he was cold and very chill:
 His face was gloom, his heart was sorrow,
 Alas! that day for Harry Gill!
 That day he wore a riding-coat,
 But not a whit the warmer he:
 Another was on Thursday brought,
 And ere the Sabbath he had three.

'Twas all in vain, a useless matter,
 And blankets were about him pinned;
 Yet still his jaws and teeth they clatter,
 Like a loose casement in the wind.

¹Cheerful.

And Harry's flesh it fell away;
And all who see him say, 'tis plain,
That, live as long as live he may,
He never will be warm again.

No word to any man he utters,
A-bed or up, to young or old;
But ever to himself he mutters,
"Poor Harry Gill is very cold."
A-bed or up, by night or day;
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
Now think, ye farmers all, I pray,
Of Goody Blake and Harry Gill!

SIMON LEE

THE OLD HUNTSMAN; WITH AN INCIDENT IN
WHICH HE WAS CONCERNED¹

IN THE sweet shire of Cardigan,
Not far from pleasant Ivor-hall,
An old Man dwells, a little man,—
'Tis said he once was tall.
Full five-and-thirty years he lived
A running huntsman merry;
And still the center of his cheek
Is red as a ripe cherry.

No man like him the horn could sound,
And hill and valley rang with glee
When Echo banded, round and round,
The halloo of Simon Lee.
In those proud days, he little cared
For husbandry or tillage;
To blither tasks did Simon rouse
The sleepers of the village.

He all the country could outrun,
Could leave both man and horse behind;
And often, ere the chase was done,
He reeled, and was stone-blind.
And still there's something in the world
At which his heart rejoices;
For when the chiming hounds are out,
He dearly loves their voices!

But, oh the heavy change!—bereft
Of health, strength, friends, and kindred, see!
Old Simon to the world is left
In liveried poverty.
His Master's dead,—and no one now
Dwells in the Hall of Ivor;
Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead;
He is the sole survivor.

And he is lean and he is sick;
His body, dwindled and awry,
Rests upon ankles swoln and thick;
His legs are thin and dry.
One prop he has, and only one,
His wife, an agéd woman,
Lives with him, near the waterfall,
Upon the village Common.

Beside their moss-grown hut of clay;
Not twenty paces from the door,
A scrap of land they have, but they
Are poorest of the poor.
This scrap of land he from the heath
Enclosed when he was stronger;
But what to them avails the land
Which he can till no longer?

Oft, working by her Husband's side,
Ruth does what Simon cannot do;
For she, with scanty cause for pride,
Is stouter of the two.
And, though you with your utmost skill
From labor could not wean them,
'Tis little, very little—all
That they can do between them.

Few months of life has he in store
As he to you will tell,
For still, the more he works, the more
Do his weak ankles swell.
My gentle Reader, I perceive
How patiently you've waited,
And now I fear that you expect
Some tale will be related.

O Reader! had you in your mind
Such stores as silent thought can bring,
O gentle Reader! you would find
A tale in every thing.
What more I have to say is short,
And you must kindly take it:
It is no tale; but, should you think,
Perhaps a tale you'll make it.

One summer-day I chanced to see
This old Man doing all he could
To unearth the root of an old tree,
A stump of rotten wood.
The mattock tottered in his hand;
So vain was his endeavor,
That at the root of the old tree
He might have worked for ever.

¹Written and published in 1798.

"You're overtasked, good Simon Lee,
Give me your tool," to him I said;
And at the word right gladly he
Received my proffered aid.
I struck, and with a single blow
The tangled root I severed,
At which the poor old Man so long
And vainly had endeavored.

The tears into his eyes were brought,
And thanks and praises seemed to run
So fast out of his heart, I thought
They never would have done.
—I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With coldness still returning;
Alas! the gratitude of men
Hath oftener left me mourning.

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING¹

I HEARD a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sat reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure:—
But the least motion which they made,
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

¹Written and published in 1798.

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY²

"WHY, William, on that old gray stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?

"Where are your books?—that light be-
queathed
To Beings else forlorn and blind!
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

"You look round on your Mother Earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!"

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply:

"The eye—it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
Against or with our will.

"Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

"—Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old gray stone,
And dream my time away."

THE TABLES TURNED³

AN EVENING SCENE ON THE SAME SUBJECT

Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books;
Or surely you'll grow double:
Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?

²Written and published in 1798. This poem and the one which follows "arose out of conversation with a friend who was somewhat unreasonably attached to modern books of moral philosophy" (Wordsworth, Preface to first edition of *Lyrical Ballads*).

³Written and published in 1798.

The sun, above the mountain's head,
A freshening luster mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your Teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN
ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE
WYE DURING A TOUR. JULY 13, 1798¹

Five years have passed; five summers, with
the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-
springs

¹Published in 1798. "No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days, with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol" (Wordsworth, *Fenwick Note*). This great poem is of the utmost importance for understanding the influence Wordsworth felt from nature.

With a soft inland murmur.—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect

The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,

Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves

'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines

Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,

Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—

In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer through the
woods,

How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished
thought,

With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing
thoughts

That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was
when first

I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than
one

Who sought the thing he loved. For nature
then

(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone
by)

To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion; the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy
wood,

Their colors and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is
past,

And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing often-
times

The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample
power

To chasten and subdue. And I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am
I still

A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty
world

Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:

For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I
catch

The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil
tongues,

Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish
men,

Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind

Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh!
then,

If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing
thoughts

Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, per-
chance—

If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes
these gleams

Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshiper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy
sake!

STRANGE FITS OF PAS- SION HAVE I KNOWN¹

STRANGE fits of passion have I known:
And I will dare to tell,
But in the Lover's ear alone,
What once to me befell.

When she I loved looked every day
Fresh as a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath an evening-moon.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye,
All over the wide lea;
With quickening pace my horse drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard-plot;
And, as we climbed the hill,
The sinking moon to Lucy's cot
Came near, and nearer still.

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And all the while my eyes I kept
On the descending moon.

My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
He raised, and never stopped:
When down behind the cottage roof,
At once, the bright moon dropped.

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
Into a Lover's head!

"O mercy!" to myself I cried,
"If Lucy should be dead!"

SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS²

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

I TRAVELED AMONG UNKNOWN MEN³

I TRAVELED among unknown men,
In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream!
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed
The bowers where Lucy played;
And thine too is the last green field
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

²Written in 1799, published in 1800.

³Written in 1799, published in 1807.

¹Written in 1799, published in 1800.

THREE YEARS SHE GREW
IN SUN AND SHOWER¹

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This Child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn,
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mold the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

¹Written in 1799, published in 1800.

A SLUMBER DID MY
SPIRIT SEAL²

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

LUCY GRAY

OR

SOLITUDE³

OF I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
—The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

"To-night will be a stormy night—
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, Child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

"That, Father! will I gladly do:
'Tis scarcely afternoon—
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon!"

At this the Father raised his hook,
And snapped a faggot-band;
He plied his work;—and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe:
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

²Written in 1799, published in 1800.

³Written in 1799, published in 1800.

The storm came on before its time:
She wandered up and down;
And many a hill did Lucy climb:
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

They wept—and, turning homeward, cried,
“In heaven we all shall meet;”
—When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy’s feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill’s edge
They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone-wall;

And then an open field they crossed:
The marks were still the same;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank;
And further there were none!

—Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O’er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

RUTH¹

WHEN Ruth was left half desolate,
Her Father took another Mate;
And Ruth, not seven years old,
A slighted child, at her own will
Went wandering over dale and hill,
In thoughtless freedom, bold.

And she had made a pipe of straw,
And music from that pipe could draw
Like sounds of winds and floods;
Had built a bower upon the green,
As if she from her birth had been
An infant of the woods.

Beneath her father’s roof, alone
She seemed to live; her thoughts her own,
Herself her own delight;
Pleased with herself, nor sad, nor gay;
And, passing thus the live-long day,
She grew to woman’s height.

There came a Youth from Georgia’s shore—
A military casque he wore,
With splendid feathers dressed;
He brought them from the Cherokees;
The feathers nodded in the breeze,
And made a gallant crest.

From Indian blood you deem him sprung:
But no! he spake the English tongue,
And bore a soldier’s name;
And, when America was free
From battle and from jeopardy,
He ’cross the ocean came.

With hues of genius on his cheek
In finest tones the Youth could speak:
—While he was yet a boy,
The moon, the glory of the sun,
And streams that murmur as they run,
Had been his dearest joy.

He was a lovely youth! I guess
The panther in the wilderness
Was not so fair as he;
And, when he chose to sport and play,
No dolphin ever was so gay
Upon the tropic sea

Among the Indians he had fought,
And with him many tales he brought
Of pleasure and of fear;
Such tales as told to any maid
By such a Youth, in the green shade,
Were perilous to hear.

He told of girls—a happy rout!
Who quit their fold with dance and shout,
Their pleasant Indian town,
To gather strawberries all day long;
Returning with a choral song
When daylight is gone down.

¹Written in 1799, published in 1800.

He spake of plants that hourly change
 Their blossoms, through a boundless range
 Of intermingling hues;
 With budding, fading, faded flowers
 They stand the wonder of the bowers
 From morn to evening dews.

He told of the magnolia, spread
 High as a cloud, high over head!
 The cypress and her spire;
 —Of flowers that with one scarlet gleam
 Cover a hundred leagues, and seem
 To set the hills on fire.

The Youth of green savannahs spake,
 And many an endless, endless lake,
 With all its fairy crowds
 Of islands, that together lie
 As quietly as spots of sky
 Among the evening clouds.

"How pleasant," then he said, "it were
 A fisher or a hunter there,
 In sunshine or in shade
 To wander with an easy mind;
 And build a household fire, and find
 A home in every glade!

"What days and what bright years! Ah me!
 Our life were life indeed, with thee
 So passed in quiet bliss,
 And all the while," said he, "to know
 That we were in a world of woe,
 On such an earth as this!"

And then he sometimes interwove
 Fond thoughts about a father's love;
 "For there," said he, "are spun
 Around the heart such tender ties,
 That our own children to our eyes
 Are dearer than the sun.

"Sweet Ruth! and could you go with me
 My helpmate in the woods to be,
 Our shed at night to rear;
 Or run, my own adopted bride,
 A sylvan huntress at my side,
 And drive the flying deer!

"Belovéd Ruth!"—No more he said,
 The wakeful Ruth at midnight shed
 A solitary tear:
 She thought again—and did agree
 With him to sail across the sea,
 And drive the flying deer.

"And now, as fitting is and right,
 We in the church our faith will plight,
 A husband and a wife."
 Even so they did; and I may say
 That to sweet Ruth that happy day
 Was more than human life.

Through dream and vision did she sink,
 Delighted all the while to think
 That on those lonesome floods,
 And green savannahs, she should share
 His board with lawful joy, and bear
 His name in the wild woods.

But, as you have before been told,
 This Stripling, sportive, gay, and bold,
 And, with his dancing crest,
 So beautiful, through savage lands
 Had roamed about, with vagrant bands
 Of Indians in the West.

The wind, the tempest roaring high,
 The tumult of a tropic sky,
 Might well be dangerous food
 For him, a Youth to whom was given
 So much of earth—so much of heaven,
 And such impetuous blood.

Whatever in those climes he found
 Irregular in sight or sound
 Did to his mind impart
 A kindred impulse, seemed allied
 To his own powers, and justified
 The workings of his heart.

Nor less, to feed voluptuous thought,
 The beauteous forms of nature wrought,
 Fair trees and gorgeous flowers;
 The breezes their own languor lent;
 The stars had feelings, which they sent
 Into those favored bowers.

Yet, in his worst pursuits I ween
 That sometimes there did intervene
 Pure hopes of high intent:
 For passions linked to form so fair
 And stately, needs must have their share
 Of noble sentiment.

But ill he lived, much evil saw,
 With men to whom no better law
 Nor better life was known;
 Deliberately, and undecieved,
 Those wild men's vices he received,
 And gave them back his own.

His genius and his moral frame
 Were thus impaired, and he became
 The slave of low desires:
 A Man who without self-control
 Would seek what the degraded soul
 Unworthily admires.

And yet he with no feigned delight
 Had wooed the Maiden, day and night
 Had loved her, night and morn:
 What could he less than love a Maid
 Whose heart with so much nature played?
 So kind and so forlorn!

Sometimes, most earnestly, he said,
 "O Ruth! I have been worse than dead,
 False thoughts, thoughts bold and vain,
 Encompassed me on every side
 When I, in confidence and pride,
 Had crossed the Atlantic main.

"Before me shone a glorious world—
 Fresh as a banner bright, unfurled
 To music suddenly:
 I looked upon those hills and plains,
 And seemed as if let loose from chains,
 To live at liberty.

"No more of this; for now, by thee
 Dear Ruth! more happily set free
 With nobler zeal I burn;
 My soul from darkness is released,
 Like the whole sky when to the east
 The morning doth return."

Full soon that better mind was gone;
 No hope, no wish remained, not one,—
 They stirred him now no more;
 New objects did new pleasure give,
 And once again he wished to live
 As lawless as before.

Meanwhile, as thus with him it fared,
 They for the voyage were prepared,
 And went to the sea-shore,
 But, when they thither came, the Youth
 Deserted his poor Bride, and Ruth
 Could never find him more.

God help thee, Ruth!—Such pains she had,
 That she in half a year was mad,
 And in a prison housed;
 And there, with many a doleful song
 Made of wild words, her cup of wrong
 She fearfully caroused.

Yet sometimes milder hours she knew,
 Nor wanted sun, nor rain, nor dew,
 Nor pastimes of the May;
 —They all were with her in her cell;
 And a clear brook with cheerful knell
 Did o'er the pebbles play.

When Ruth three seasons thus had lain,
 There came a respite to her pain;
 She from her prison fled;
 But of the Vagrant none took thought;
 And where it liked her best she sought
 Her shelter and her bread.

Among the fields she breathed again:
 The master-current of her brain
 Ran permanent and free;
 And, coming to the Banks of Tone,
 There did she rest; and dwell alone
 Under the greenwood tree.

The engines of her pain, the tools
 That shaped her sorrow, rocks and pools,
 And airs that gently stir
 The vernal leaves—she loved them still;
 Nor ever taxed them with the ill
 Which had been done to her.

A Barn her *winter* bed supplies;
 But, till the warmth of summer skies
 And summer days is gone,
 (And all do in this tale agree)
 She sleeps beneath the greenwood tree,
 And other home hath none.

An innocent life, yet far astray!
 And Ruth will, long before her day,
 Be broken down and old:
 Sore aches she needs must have! but less
 Of mind, than body's wretchedness,
 From damp, and rain, and cold.

If she is pressed by want of food,
 She from her dwelling in the wood
 Repairs to a road-side;
 And there she begs at one steep place
 Where up and down with easy pace
 The horsemen-travelers ride.

That oaten pipe of hers is mute,
 Or thrown away; but with a flute
 Her loneliness she cheers:
 This flute, made of a hemlock stalk,
 At evening in his homeward walk
 The Quantock woodman hears.

I, too, have passed her on the hills
 Setting her little water-mills
 By spouts and fountains wild—
 Such small machinery as she turned
 Ere she had wept, ere she had mourned,
 A young and happy Child!

Farewell! and when thy days are told,
 Ill-fated Ruth, in hallowed mold
 Thy corpse shall buried be,
 For thee a funeral bell shall ring,
 And all the congregation sing
 A Christian psalm for thee.

MICHAEL¹

A PASTORAL POEM

IF FROM the public way you turn your steps
 Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead
 Ghyll,²

You will suppose that with an upright path
 Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
 The pastoral mountains front you, face to
 face.

But, courage! for around that boisterous
 brook

The mountains have all opened out them-
 selves,

And made a hidden valley of their own.

No habitation can be seen; but they
 Who journey thither find themselves alone
 With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and
 kites

That overhead are sailing in the sky.

It is in truth an utter solitude;

Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
 But for one object which you might pass by,

¹Written and published in 1800. "Written at Town-
 end, Grasmere, about the same time as *The Brothers*.
 The Sheepfold, on which so much of the poem turns,
 remains, or rather the ruins of it. The character and
 circumstances of Luke were taken from a family to
 whom had belonged, many years before, the house we
 lived in at Town-end, along with some fields and wood-
 lands on the eastern shore of Grasmere. The name of
 the Evening Star was not in fact given to this house, but
 to another on the same side of the valley, more to the
 north" (Wordsworth, *Fenwick Note*). Wordsworth
 wrote to a friend: "I have attempted to give a picture
 of a man, of strong mind and lively sensibility, agitated
 by two of the most powerful affections of the human
 heart: the parental affection and the love of property
 (landed property), including the feelings of inheritance,
 home, and personal and family independence."

²A ravine with a stream running through it.

Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
 Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
 And to that simple object appertains
 A story—unenriched with strange events,
 Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
 Or for the summer shade. It was the first
 Of those domestic tales that spake to me
 Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
 Whom I already loved; not verily
 For their own sakes, but for the fields and
 hills

Where was their occupation and abode.
 And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
 Careless of books, yet having felt the power
 Of Nature, by the gentle agency
 Of natural objects, led me on to feel
 For passions that were not my own, and
 think

(At random and imperfectly indeed)
 On man, the heart of man, and human life.
 Therefore, although it be a history
 Homely and rude, I will relate the same
 For the delight of a few natural hearts;
 And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
 Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
 Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
 There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his
 name;

An old man, stout of heart, and strong of
 limb.

His bodily frame had been from youth to age
 Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
 Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
 And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
 And watchful more than ordinary men.

Hence had he learned the meaning of all
 winds,

Of blasts of every tone; and oftentimes,
 When others heeded not, He heard the South
 Make subterraneous music, like the noise
 Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
 The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
 Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
 "The winds are now devising work for me!"
 And, truly, at all times, the storm, that
 drives

The traveler to a shelter, summoned him
 Up to the mountains: he had been alone
 Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
 That came to him, and left him, on the
 heights.

So lived he till his eightieth year was past.

And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
 That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
 Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
 Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
 The common air; hills, which with vigorous step
 He had so often climbed; which had impressed
 So many incidents upon his mind
 Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
 Which, like a book, preserved the memory
 Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
 Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
 The certainty of honorable gain;
 Those fields, those hills—what could they less? had laid
 Strong hold on his affections, were to him
 A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
 The pleasure which there is in life itself.
 His days had not been passed in singleness.
 His Helpmate was a comely matron, old—
 Though younger than himself full twenty years.
 She was a woman of a stirring life,
 Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
 Of antique form; this large, for spinning wool;
 That small, for flax; and if one wheel had rest
 It was because the other was at work.
 The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
 An only Child, who had been born to them
 When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
 To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,
 With one foot in the grave. This only Son,
 With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
 The one of an inestimable worth,
 Made all their household. I may truly say,
 That they were as a proverb in the vale
 For endless industry. When day was gone,
 And from their occupations out of doors
 The Son and Father were come home, even then,
 Their labor did not cease; unless when all
 Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
 Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,

Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
 And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal

Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)
 And his old Father both betook themselves
 To such convenient work as might employ
 Their hands by the fireside; perhaps to card

Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
 Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
 Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,

That in our ancient uncouth country style
 With huge and black projection overbrowed
 Large space beneath, as duly as the light
 Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp;

An aged utensil, which had performed
 Service beyond all others of its kind.

Early at evening did it burn—and late,
 Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
 Which, going by from year to year, had found,

And left, the couple neither gay perhaps
 Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,

Living a life of eager industry.

And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,

There by the light of this old lamp they sat,
 Father and Son, while far into the night
 The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
 Making the cottage through the silent hours
 Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
 This light was famous in its neighborhood,
 And was a public symbol of the life
 That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,

Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
 Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,

High into Easedale,¹ up to Dunmail-Raise,²
 And westward to the village near the lake;
 And from this constant light, so regular
 And so far seen, the House itself, by all
 Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
 Both old and young, was named the *Evening Star*.

Thus living on through such a length of years,

¹Near Grasmere.

²The pass on the way from Grasmere to Keswick.

The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's heart

This son of his old age was yet more dear—
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all—

Than that a child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,

And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy! For oftentimes

Old Michael, while he was a-babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the Young-one in his sight, when he
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool

Sat with a fettered sheep before him stretched

Under the large old oak, that near his door
Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,

Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The *Clipping Tree*, a name which yet it bears.
There, while they two were sitting in the shade,

With others round them, earnest all and blithe,

Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up

A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old;
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped

With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipped
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help;
And for this cause not always, I believe,
Receiving from his Father hire of praise.
Though nought was left undone which staff,
or voice,

Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand

Against the mountain blasts; and to the heights,

Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before

Were dearer now? that from the Boy there came

Feelings and emanations—things which were

Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old Man's heart seemed born again?

Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up:

And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,

He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived

From day to day, to Michael's ear there came

Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound

In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had pressed upon him; and old Michael now

Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,

At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.

As soon as he had armed himself with strength
 To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
 The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
 A portion of his patrimonial fields.
 Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
 And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,
 Two evenings after he had heard the news,
 "I have been toiling more than seventy
 years,
 And in the open sunshine of God's love
 Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours
 Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
 That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
 Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
 Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
 And I have lived to be a fool at last
 To my own family. An evil man
 That was, and made an evil choice, if he
 Were false to us; and if he were not false,
 There are ten thousand to whom loss like
 this
 Had been no sorrow. I forgive him;—but
 'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.
 "When I began, my purpose was to speak
 Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
 Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
 Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
 He shall possess it, free as is the wind
 That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
 Another kinsman—he will be our friend
 In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
 Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall
 go,
 And with his kinsman's help and his own
 thrift
 He quickly will repair this loss, and then
 He may return to us. If here he stay,
 What can be done? Where every one is
 poor,
 What can be gained?"
 At this the old Man paused,
 And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
 Was busy, looking back into past times.
 There's Richard Bateman, thought she to
 herself,
 He was a parish-boy—at the church-door
 They made a gathering for him, shillings,
 pence,
 And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbors
 bought
 A basket, which they filled with peddler's
 wares;
 And, with this basket on his arm, the lad

Went up to London, found a master there,
 Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
 To go and overlook his merchandise
 Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous
 rich,
 And left estates and monies to the poor.
 And, at his birthplace, built a chapel, floored
 With marble which he sent from foreign
 lands.
 These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
 Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
 And her face brightened. The old Man was
 glad,
 And thus resumed:—"Well, Isabel! this
 scheme
 These two days has been meat and drink to
 me.
 Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
 —We have enough—I wish indeed that I
 Were younger;—but this hope is a good hope.
 —Make ready Luke's best garments, of the
 best
 Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
 To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
 —If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-night."
 Here Michael ceased, and to the fields
 went forth
 With a light heart. The Housewife for five
 days
 Was restless morn and night, and all day long
 Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
 Things needful for the journey of her son.
 But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
 To stop her in her work: for, when she lay
 By Michael's side, she through the last two
 nights
 Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
 And when they rose at morning she could see
 That all his hopes were gone. That day at
 noon,
 She said to Luke, while they two by them-
 selves
 Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not
 go:
 We have no other Child but thee to lose—
 None to remember—do not go away,
 For if thou leave thy Father he will die."
 The Youth made answer with a jocund
 voice;
 And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
 Recovered heart. That evening her best
 fare
 Did she bring forth, and all together sat
 Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
The expected letter from their kinsman
came.

With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the Boy;
To which, requests were added, that forth-
with

He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbors
round;

Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
"He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
The Housewife answered, talking much of
things

Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead
Ghyll,

In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheepfold; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's
edge

Lay thrown together, ready for the work.

With Luke that evening thitherward he
walked:

And soon as they had reached the place he
stopped,

And thus the old Man spake to him:—"My
Son,

To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full
heart

I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.

I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should
touch

On things thou canst not know of.—After
thou

First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls
To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's
tongue

Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.

Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy
joy

Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month fol-
lowed month,

And in the open fields my life was passed
And on the mountains; else I think that
thou

Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's
knees.

But we were playmates, Luke: among these
hills,

As well thou knowest, in us the old and
young

Have played together, nor with me didst
thou

Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his
hand,

And said, "Nay, do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not
speak.

—Even to the utmost I have been to thee

A kind and a good Father: and herein

I but repay a gift which I myself

Received at others' hands; for, though now
old

Beyond the common life of man, I still

Remember them who loved me in my youth.

Both of them sleep together: here they lived,

As all their Forefathers had done; and when
At length their time was come, they were not

loath

To give their bodies to the family mold.

I wished that thou should'st live the life
they lived:

But, 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,

And see so little gain from threescore years.

These fields were burthened when they came
to me;

Till I was forty years of age, not more

Than half of my inheritance was mine.

I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my
work,

And till these three weeks past the land was
free.

—It looks as if it never could endure

Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,

If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good

That thou should'st go."

At this the old Man paused;

Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,

Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:

"This was a work for us; and now, my Son, It is a work for me. But, lay one stone— Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.

Nay, Boy, be of good hope;—we both may live

To see a better day. At eighty-four I still am strong and hale;—do thou thy part;

I will do mine.—I will begin again With many tasks that were resigned to thee: Up to the heights, and in among the storms, Will I without thee go again, and do All works which I was wont to do alone, Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy!

Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast

With many hopes; it should be so—yes—yes—

I knew that thou could'st never have a wish To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me

Only by links of love: when thou art gone, What will be left to us!—But, I forget

My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone, As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,

When thou art gone away, should evil men Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,

And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,

And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,

Who, being innocent, did for that cause Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—

When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see

A work which is not here: a covenant 'Twill be between us; but, whatever fate

Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last, And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped down,

And, as his Father had requested, laid The first stone of the Sheepfold. At the sight

The old Man's grief broke from him; to his heart

He pressed his Son, he kissed him and wept: And to the house together they returned.

—Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,

Ere the night fell;—with morrow's dawn the Boy

Began his journey, and when he had reached The public way, he put on a bold face;

And all the neighbors, as he passed their doors,

Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,

That followed him till he was out of sight.

A good report did from their Kinsman come,

Of Luke and his well-doing: and the Boy Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news, Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout

"The prettiest letters that were ever seen."

Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts. So, many months passed on: and once again

The Shepherd went about his daily work With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now

Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour He to that valley took his way, and there

Wrought at the Sheepfold. Meantime Luke began

To slacken in his duty; and, at length, He in the dissolute city gave himself

To evil courses: ignominy and shame Fell on him, so that he was driven at last

To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love; 'Twill make a thing endurable, which else

Would overset the brain, or break the heart: I have conversed with more than one who well

Remember the old Man, and what he was Years after he had heard this heavy news.

His bodily frame had been from youth to age

Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,

And listened to the wind; and, as before, Performed all kinds of labor for his sheep,

And for the land, his small inheritance. And to that hollow dell from time to time

Did he repair, to build the Fold of which His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet

The pity which was then in every heart For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all

That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes was
he seen

Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,

Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.

The length of full seven years, from time to
time,

He at the building of this Sheepfold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.

Three years, or little more, did Isabel

Survive her Husband: at her death the
estate

Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.

The Cottage which was named the *Evening*
Star

Is gone—the ploughshare has been through
the ground

On which it stood; great changes have been
wrought

In all the neighborhood:—yet the oak is
left

That grew beside their door; and the remains

Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be seen

Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead

Ghyll.

TO A YOUNG LADY

WHO HAD BEEN REPROACHED FOR TAKING
LONG WALKS IN THE COUNTRY¹

DEAR Child of Nature, let them rail!

—There is a nest in a green dale,

A harbor and a hold;

Where thou, a Wife and Friend, shalt see

Thy own heart-stirring days, and be

A light to young and old.

There, healthy as a shepherd boy,

And treading among flowers of joy

Which at no season fade,

Thou, while thy babes around thee cling,

Shalt show us how divine a thing

A Woman may be made.

Thy thoughts and feelings shall not die,

Nor leave thee, when gray hairs are nigh,

A melancholy slave;

But an old age serene and bright,

And lovely as a Lapland night,

Shall lead thee to thy grave.

¹Written perhaps in 1801; printed in the *Morning Post*, 1802, and in the *Poems* of 1807.

ALICE FELL

OR

POVERTY²

THE post-boy drove with fierce career,
For threatening clouds the moon had
drowned;

When, as we hurried on, my ear
Was smitten with a startling sound.

As if the wind blew many ways,
I heard the sound,—and more and more;
It seemed to follow with the chaise,
And still I heard it as before.

At length I to the boy called out;
He stopped his horses at the word,
But neither cry, nor voice, nor shout,
Nor aught else like it, could be heard.

The boy then smacked his whip, and fast
The horses scampered through the rain;
But, hearing soon upon the blast
The cry, I bade him halt again.

Forthwith alighting on the ground,
“Whence comes,” said I, “this piteous
moan?”

And there a little Girl I found,
Sitting behind the chaise, alone.

“My cloak!” no other word she spake,
But loud and bitterly she wept,
As if her innocent heart would break;
And down from off her seat she leapt.

“What ails you, child?”—she sobbed,
“Look here!”

I saw it in the wheel entangled
A weather-beaten rag as e’er
From any garden scare-crow dangled.

There, twisted between nave and spoke,
It hung, nor could at once be freed;
But our joint pains unloosed the cloak,
A miserable rag indeed!

“And whither are you going, child,
To-night along these lonesome ways?”
“To Durham,” answered she, half wild—
“Then come with me into the chaise.”

²Written in 1802, published in 1807.

Insensible to all relief
Sat the poor girl, and forth did send
Sob after sob, as if her grief
Could never, never have an end.

"My child, in Durham do you dwell?"
She checked herself in her distress,
And said, "My name is Alice Fell;
I'm fatherless and motherless.

"And I to Durham, Sir, belong."
Again, as if the thought would choke
Her very heart, her grief grew strong;
And all was for her tattered cloak!

The chaise drove on; our journey's end
Was nigh; and, sitting by my side,
As if she had lost her only friend
She wept, nor would be pacified.

Up to the tavern-door we post;
Of Alice and her grief I told;
And I gave money to the host,
To buy a new cloak for the old.

"And let it be of duffel¹ gray,
As warm a cloak as man can sell!"
Proud creature was she the next day,
The little orphan, Alice Fell!

TO THE CUCKOO²

O BLITHE New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear,
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;

¹See note above, first stanza of *Goody Blake and Harry Gill*, p. 92.

²Written in 1802, published in 1807.

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blesséd Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for Thee!

MY HEART LEAPS UP³

MY HEART leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:

So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!

The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE⁴

I

THERE was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods;
Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove
broods;

The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chat-
ters;
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise
of waters.

³Written in 1802, published in 1807.

⁴Written in 1802, published in 1807. "Written at Town-end, Grasmere. This old Man I met a few hundred yards from my cottage; and the account of him is taken from his own mouth. I was in the state of feeling described in the beginning of the poem, while crossing over Barton Fell from Mr. Clarkson's, at the foot of Ullswater, towards Askham. The image of the hare I then observed on the ridge of the Fell" (Wordsworth, *Fenwick Note*).

II

All things that love the sun are out of doors;
 The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
 The grass is bright with rain-drops;—on
 the moors
 The hare is running races in her mirth;
 And with her feet she from the plashy earth
 Raises a mist; that, glittering in the sun,
 Runs with her all the way, wherever she
 doth run.

III

I was a Traveler then upon the moor,
 I saw the hare that raced about with joy;
 I heard the woods and distant waters roar;
 Or heard them not, as happy as a boy:
 The pleasant season did my heart employ:
 My old remembrances went from me wholly;
 And all the ways of men, so vain and mel-
 ancholy.

IV

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the
 might
 •Of joy in minds that can no further go,
 As high as we have mounted in delight
 In our dejection do we sink as low;
 To me that morning did it happen so;
 And fears and fancies thick upon me came;
 Dim sadness—and blind thoughts, I knew
 not, nor could name.

V

I heard the sky-lark warbling in the sky;
 And I bethought me of the playful hare:
 Even such a happy Child of earth am I;
 Even as these blissful creatures do I fare;
 Far from the world I walk, and from all
 care;
 But there may come another day to me—
 Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

VI

My whole life I have lived in pleasant
 thought,
 As if life's business were a summer mood;
 As if all needful things would come unsought
 To genial faith, still rich in genial good;
 But how can He expect that others should
 Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
 Love him, who for himself will take no heed
 at all?

VII

I thought of Chatterton,¹ the marvelous
 Boy,
 The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride;
 Of Him² who walked in glory and in joy
 Following his plough, along the mountain-
 side:
 By our own spirits are we deified:
 We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;
 But thereof come in the end despondency
 and madness.

VIII

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace,
 A leading from above, a something given,
 Yet it befell that, in this lonely place,
 When I with these untoward thoughts had
 striven,
 Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven
 I saw a Man before me unawares:
 The oldest man he seemed that ever wore
 gray hairs.

IX

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
 Couched on the bald top of an eminence;
 Wonder to all who do the same espy,
 By what means it could thither come, and
 whence;
 So that it seems a thing endued with sense:
 Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
 Of rock or sand repositeth, there to sun itself;

X

Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor
 dead,
 Nor all asleep—in his extreme old age:
 His body was bent double, feet and head
 Coming together in life's pilgrimage;
 As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
 Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
 A more than human weight upon his frame
 had cast.

XI

Himself he propped, limbs, body, and pale
 face,
 Upon a long gray staff of shaven wood:
 And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,

¹Thomas Chatterton (1752–1770), who died by his own hand.

²Robert Burns.

Upon the margin of that moorish flood
Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
That heareth not the loud winds when they
call
And moveth all together, if it move at all.

XII

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
Upon the muddy water, which he conned,
As if he had been reading in a book:
And now a stranger's privilege I took;
And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
"This morning gives us promise of a glorious
day."

XIII

A gentle answer did the old Man make,
In courteous speech which forth he slowly
drew:
And him with further words I thus be-
spoke,
"What occupation do you there pursue?
This is a lonesome place for one like you."
Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet-vivid
eyes,

XIV

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
But each in solemn order followed each,
With something of a lofty utterance
dressed—
Choice word and measured phrase, above the
reach
Of ordinary men; a stately speech;
Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men, who give to God and man
their dues.

XV

He told, that to these waters he had
come
To gather leeches, being old and poor:
Employment hazardous and wearisome!
And he had many hardships to endure:
From pond to pond he roamed, from moor
to moor;
Housing, with God's good help, by choice or
chance,
And in this way he gained an honest main-
tenance.

XVI

The old Man still stood talking by my side;
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarce heard; nor word from word could I
divide;
And the whole body of the Man did seem
Like one whom I had met with in a dream;
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admon-
ishment.

XVII

My former thoughts returned: the fear that
kills;
And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
Cold, pain, and labor, and all fleshly ills;
And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
—Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
My question eagerly did I renew,
"How is it that you live, and what is it you
do?"

XVIII

He with a smile did then his words repeat;
And said, that, gathering leeches, far and
wide
He traveled; stirring thus above his feet
The waters of the pools where they abide.
"Once I could meet with them on every side;
But they have dwindled long by slow decay;
Yet still I persevere, and find them where I
may."

XIX

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
The old Man's shape, and speech—all trou-
bled me:
In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
About the weary moors continually,
Wandering about alone and silently.
While I these thoughts within myself pur-
sued,
He, having made a pause, the same discourse
renewed.

XX

And soon with this he other matter blended,
Cheerfully uttered, with demeanor kind,
But stately in the main; and when he ended,
I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.
"God," said I, "be my help and stay secure;
I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely
moor!"

TO THE DAISY¹

BRIGHT Flower! whose home is everywhere,
 Bold in maternal Nature's care,
 And all the long year through the heir
 Of joy and sorrow;
 Methinks that there abides in thee
 Some concord with humanity,
 Given to no other flower I see
 The forest thorough!

Is it that Man is soon depressed?
 A thoughtless Thing! who, once unblest'd,
 Does little on his memory rest,
 Or on his reason,
 And Thou wouldst teach him how to find
 A shelter under every wind,
 A hope for times that are unkind
 And every season?

Thou wander'st the wide world about,
 Unchecked by pride or scrupulous doubt,
 With friends to greet thee, or without,
 Yet pleased and willing;
 Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,
 And all things suffering from all,
 Thy function apostolical
 In peace fulfilling.

COMPOSED UPON WEST-
MINSTER BRIDGE, SEP-
TEMBER 3, 1802²

EARTH has not anything to show more fair:
 Dull would he be of soul who could pass
 by
 A sight so touching in its majesty:
 This City now doth, like a garment, wear
 The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
 Ships, towers, domes, theaters, and temples
 lie
 Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
 All bright and glittering in the smokeless
 air.
 Never did sun more beautifully steep
 In his first splendor, valley, rock, or hill;
 Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
 The river glideth at his own sweet will:
 Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
 And all that mighty heart is lying still!

IT IS A BEAUTEOUS
EVENING, CALM AND
FREE³

IT is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
 The holy time is quiet as a Nun
 Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
 Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
 The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the
 Sea:

Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
 And doth with his eternal motion make
 A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
 Dear Child!⁴ dear Girl! that walkest with me
 here,
 If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
 Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
 Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the
 year,
 And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
 God being with thee when we know it not.

COMPOSED BY THE SEA-
SIDE, NEAR CALAIS,
AUGUST, 1802⁵

FAIR Star of evening, Splendor of the west,
 Star of my Country!—on the horizon's brink
 Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to
 sink
 On England's bosom, yet well pleased to
 rest,
 Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
 Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I think,
 Shouldst be my Country's emblem; and
 shouldst wink,
 Bright Star! with laughter on her banners,
 dressed
 In thy fresh beauty. There! that dusky
 spot
 Beneath thee, that is England; there she
 lies.
 Blessings be on you both! one hope, one
 lot,
 One life, one glory!—I, with many a fear
 For my dear Country, many heartfelt
 sighs,
 Among men who do not love her, linger
 here.

¹Written in 1802, published in 1807.²Written on 31 July, 1802, published in 1807.³Written in August, 1802, published in 1807.⁴Wordsworth's French daughter, Caroline.⁵Published in 1807.

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC¹

ONCE did She hold the gorgeous east in fee;
And was the safeguard of the west: the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
She was a maiden City, bright and free;
No guile seduced, no force could violate;
And, when she took unto herself a Mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.²
And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final day:
Men are we, and must grieve when even the
Shade
Of that which once was great is passed away.

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE³

TOUSSAINT, the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the whistling Rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless
den;—
O miserable Chieftain! where and when
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do
thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left
behind
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth,
and skies;

¹Written in 1802, published in 1807. In the thirteenth century Venice controlled a portion of the Eastern Empire, and for a long time protected Western Europe from the Turks. The city was founded in the fifth century and had been independent for more than a thousand years when it was conquered by Napoleon in 1797, and its territory divided between Austria and France.

²An allusion to the annual ceremony, dating from the twelfth century, of marriage between Venice and the Adriatic, in which the Doge threw a ring into the sea.

³Written probably in August, 1802; published in the *Morning Post* in 1803 and in the *Poems* of 1807. Toussaint was governor of St. Domingo and leader of the African slaves freed by decree of the French Convention in 1794. When Napoleon published an edict re-establishing slavery in St. Domingo Toussaint offered resistance, was arrested and sent to Paris in June, 1802, and there died in prison in April, 1803.

There's not a breathing of the common
wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

SEPTEMBER, 1802. NEAR DOVER⁴

INLAND, within a hollow vale, I stood;
And saw, while sea was calm and air was
clear,
The coast of France—the coast of France
how near!
Drawn almost into frightful neighborhood.
I shrunk; for verily the barrier flood
Was like a lake, or river bright and fair,
A span of waters; yet what power is there!
What mightiness for evil and for good!
Even so doth God protect us if we be
Virtuous and wise. Winds blow, and wa-
ters roll,
Strength to the brave, and Power, and
Deity;
Yet in themselves are nothing! One decree
Spake laws to *them*, and said that by the
soul
Only, the Nations shall be great and free.

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802⁵

O FRIEND! I know not which way I must
look
For comfort, being, as I am, oppressed,
To think that now our life is only dressed
For show; mean handy-work of craftsman,
cook,
Or groom!—We must run glittering like a
brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest'd:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

⁴Published in 1807.

⁵Published in 1807.

LONDON, 1802¹

MILTON! thou shouldst be living at this hour:

England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and
bower,

Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the
sea:

Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

GREAT MEN HAVE BEEN
AMONG US²

GREAT men have been among us; hands that
penned

And tongues that uttered wisdom—better
none:

The later Sidney, Marvel, Harrington,
Young Vane,³ and others who called Milton
friend.

These moralists could act and comprehend:
They knew how genuine glory was put on;
Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
In splendor: what strength was, that would
not bend

But in magnanimous meekness. France,
'tis strange,

Hath brought forth no such souls as we had
then.

Perpetual emptiness! unceasing change!
No single volume paramount, no code,
No master spirit, no determined road;
But equally a want of books and men!

¹Written in September, 1802; published in 1807.

²Written in September, 1802; published in 1807.

³Algernon Sidney (1622?–1683), Andrew Marvel (1621–1678), James Harrington (1611–1677), and Sir Henry Vane (1612–1662).

IT IS NOT TO BE
THOUGHT OF⁴

IT is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, un-
withstood,"⁵

Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous Stream in bogs and
sands

Should perish; and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Armory of the invincible Knights of old:
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spake; the faith and mor-
als hold

Which Milton held.—In everything we are
sprung
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

WHEN I HAVE BORNE IN
MEMORY⁶

WHEN I have borne in memory what has
tamed

Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts
depart

When men change swords for ledgers, and
desert

The student's bower for gold, some fears
unnamed

I had, my Country!—am I to be blamed?
Now, when I think of thee, and what thou
art,

Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.

For dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men:
And I by my affection was beguiled:
What wonder if a Poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child!

⁴Written in 1802 or 1803; published in the latter year
in the *Morning Post* and in the *Poems* of 1807.

⁵Samuel Daniel, *Civil War*, Bk. II, Stanza 7.

⁶Written in 1802 or 1803; published in the latter year
in the *Morning Post* and in the *Poems* of 1807.

THE GREEN LINNET¹

BENEATH these fruit-tree boughs that shed
 Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
 With brightest sunshine round me spread

Of spring's unclouded weather,
 In this sequestered nook how sweet
 To sit upon my orchard-seat!
 And birds and flowers once more to greet,
 My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
 In all this covert of the bless'd:
 Hail to Thee, far above the rest

In joy of voice and pinion!
 Thou, Linnet! in thy green array,
 Presiding Spirit here to-day,
 Dost lead the revels of the May;
 And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,
 Make all one band of paramours,
 Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
 Art sole in thy employment:
 A life, a Presence like the Air,
 Scattering thy gladness without care,
 Too bless'd with any one to pair;
 Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel trees,
 That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
 Behold him perched in ecstasies,
 Yet seeming still to hover;
 There! where the flutter of his wings
 Upon his back and body flings
 Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
 That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
 A Brother of the dancing leaves;
 Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves
 Pours forth his song in gushes;
 As if by that exulting strain
 He mocked and treated with disdain
 The voiceless form he chose to feign,
 While fluttering in the bushes.

STEPPING WESTWARD²

"What, you are stepping westward?"—
 "Yea."

—"Twould be a *wildish* destiny,
 If we, who thus together roam
 In a strange Land, and far from home,

Were in this place the guests of Chance;
 Yet who would stop, or fear to advance,
 Though home or shelter he had none,
 With such a sky to lead him on?

The dewy ground was dark and cold;
 Behind, all gloomy to behold;
 And stepping westward seemed to be
 A kind of *heavenly* destiny:
 I liked the greeting; 'twas a sound
 Of something without place or bound;
 And seemed to give me spiritual right
 To travel through that region bright.

The voice was soft, and she who spake
 Was walking by her native lake:
 The salutation had to me
 The very sound of courtesy:
 Its power was felt; and while my eye
 Was fixed upon the glowing Sky,
 The echo of the voice enwrought
 A human sweetness with the thought
 Of traveling through the world that lay
 Before me in my endless way.

TO A HIGHLAND GIRL

AT INVERSNYDE, UPON LOCH LOMOND³

SWEET Highland Girl, a very shower
 Of beauty is thy earthly dower!
 Twice seven consenting years have shed
 Their utmost bounty on thy head:
 And these gray rocks; that household lawn;
 Those trees, a veil just half withdrawn;
 This fall of water that doth make
 A murmur near the silent lake;
 This little bay; a quiet road
 That holds in shelter thy Abode—
 In truth together do ye seem
 Like something fashioned in a dream;
 Such Forms as from their covert peep
 When earthly cares are laid asleep!
 But, O fair Creature! in the light
 Of common day, so heavenly bright,

"While my Fellow-traveler and I were walking by the side of Loch Ketterine, one fine evening after sunset, in our road to a Hut where, in the course of our Tour, we had been hospitably entertained some weeks before, we met, in one of the loneliest parts of that solitary region, two well-dressed Women, one of whom said to us, by way of greeting, 'What, you are stepping westward?'" (Wordsworth.) Wordsworth, Dorothy, and Coleridge went on a tour of Scotland in August, 1803, returning to Grasmere in the middle of October.

¹Written in 1803, published in 1807.

²Written between 1803 and 1805, published in 1807.

³Written in 1803, published in 1807.

I bless Thee, Vision as thou art,
 I bless thee with a human heart;
 God shield thee to thy latest years!
 Thee, neither know I, nor thy peers;
 And yet my eyes are filled with tears.
 With earnest feeling I shall pray
 For thee when I am far away:
 For never saw I mien, or face,
 In which more plainly I could trace
 Benignity and home-bred sense
 Ripening in perfect innocence.
 Here scattered, like a random seed,
 Remote from men, Thou dost not need
 The embarrassed look of shy distress,
 And maidenly shamefacedness:
 Thou wear'st upon thy forehead clear
 The freedom of a Mountaineer:
 A face with gladness overspread!
 Soft smiles, by human kindness bred!
 And seemliness complete, that sways
 Thy courtesies, about thee plays;
 With no restraint, but such as springs
 From quick and eager visitings
 Of thoughts that lie beyond the reach
 Of thy few words of English speech:
 A bondage sweetly brooked, a strife
 That gives thy gestures grace and life!
 So have I, not unmoved in mind,
 Seen birds of tempest-loving kind—
 Thus beating up against the wind.
 What hand but would a garland cull
 For thee who art so beautiful?
 O happy pleasure! here to dwell
 Beside thee in some heathy dell;
 Adopt your homely ways, and dress,
 A Shepherd, thou a Shepherdess!
 But I could frame a wish for thee
 More like a grave reality:
 Thou art to me but as a wave
 Of the wild sea; and I would have
 Some claim upon thee, if I could,
 Though but of common neighborhood.
 What joy to hear thee, and to see!
 Thy elder Brother I would be,
 Thy Father—anything to thee!
 Now thanks to Heaven! that of its grace
 Hath led me to this lovely place.
 Joy have I had; and going hence
 I bear away my recompense.
 In spots like these it is we prize
 Our Memory, feel that she hath eyes:
 Then, why should I be loath to stir?
 I feel this place was made for her;
 To give new pleasure like the past,

Continued long as life shall last.
 Nor am I loath, though pleased at heart,
 Sweet Highland Girl! from thee to part:
 For I, methinks, till I grow old,
 As fair before me shall behold,
 As I do now, the cabin small,
 The lake, the bay, the waterfall;
 And Thee, the Spirit of them all!

SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT¹

SHE was a Phantom of delight
 When first she gleamed upon my sight;
 A lovely Apparition, sent
 To be a moment's ornament;
 Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;
 Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
 But all things else about her drawn
 From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
 A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
 To haunt, to startle, and waylay.
 I saw her upon nearer view,
 A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
 Her household motions light and free,
 And steps of virgin-liberty;
 A countenance in which did meet
 Sweet records, promises as sweet;
 A Creature not too bright or good
 For human nature's daily food;
 For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
 Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
 The very pulse of the machine;
 A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
 A Traveler between life and death;
 The reason firm, the temperate will,
 Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
 A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
 To warn, to comfort, and command;
 And yet a Spirit still, and bright
 With something of angelic light.

THE SOLITARY REAPER²

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
 Yon solitary Highland Lass!
 Reaping and singing by herself;
 Stop here, or gently pass!

¹Written in 1804, published in 1807. The subject of this poem is Mary Hutchinson, Wordsworth's wife.

²Written between 1803 and 1805, published in 1807.

Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travelers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

YARROW UNVISITED¹

FROM Stirling castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unraveled;
Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,
And with the Tweed had traveled;
And when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my "*winsome Marrow*,"²
"Whate'er betide, we'll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow."

"Let Yarrow folk, *frae* Selkirk town,
Who have been buying, selling,
Go back to Yarrow, 'tis their own;
Each maiden to her dwelling!
On Yarrow's banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow!
But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

"There's Galla Water, Leader Haughs,³
Both lying right before us;
And Dryborough, where with chiming
Tweed

The lintwhites⁴ sing in chorus;
There's pleasant Tiviot-dale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow:
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow?

"What's Yarrow but a river bare,
That glides the dark hills under?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder."

—Strange words they seemed of slight and
scorn;

My True-love sighed for sorrow;
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow!

"Oh! green," said I, "are Yarrow's holms,
And sweet is Yarrow flowing!
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,⁵
But we will leave it growing.
O'er hilly path, and open Strath,⁶
We'll wander Scotland thorough;
But, though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow.

"Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow;
The swan on still St. Mary's Lake⁷
Float double, swan and shadow!
We will not see them; will not go,
To-day, nor yet to-morrow,
Enough if in our hearts we know
There's such a place as Yarrow.

"Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it:
We have a vision of our own;
Ah! why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We'll keep them, winsome Marrow!
For when we're there, although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow!

¹The Galla flows into the Tweed near Abbotsford, and the Leader near Melrose. Haughs (holms) are low-lying lands, occasionally flooded.

²Linnets.

³This line is taken from the ballad called *The Braes of Yarrow* by Hamilton of Bangour—the ballad from which the quoted words in the first stanza also come.

⁴A valley through which a river flows.

⁵The body of water from which the Yarrow takes its rise.

¹Written in 1803, published in 1807.

²*I. e.*, Dorothy Wordsworth. The words come from a ballad whose scene is laid upon the banks of the Yarrow. Marrow means, partner.

"If Care with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly,—
Should we be loath to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy;
Should life be dull, and spirits low,
'Twill soothe us in our sorrow,
That earth has something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow!"

I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD¹

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;²
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

THE SMALL CELANDINE³

THERE is a Flower, the lesser Celandine,
That shrinks, like many more, from cold and
rain;

And, the first moment that the sun may shine,
Bright as the sun himself, 'tis out again!

¹Written in 1804, published in 1807. "The two best lines in it are by Mary. The daffodils grew, and still grow, on the margin of Ullswater, and probably may be seen to this day as beautiful in the month of March, nodding their golden heads beside the dancing and foaming waves" (Wordsworth, *Fenwick Note*).

²This and the preceding line are those by "Mary"—Mrs. Wordsworth.

³Written in 1804, published in 1807.

When hailstones have been falling, swarm on
swarm,
Or blasts the green field and the trees dis-
tressed,
Oft have I seen it muffled up from harm,
In close self-shelter, like a Thing at rest.

But lately, one rough day, this Flower I
passed
And recognized it, though an altered form,
Now standing forth an offering to the blast,
And buffeted at will by rain and storm.

I stopped, and said with inly-muttered voice,
"It doth not love the shower, nor seek the
cold:
This neither is its courage nor its choice,
But its necessity in being old.

"The sunshine may not cheer it, nor the
dew;
It cannot help itself in its decay;
Stiff in its members, withered, changed of
hue."
And, in my spleen, I smiled that it was gray.

To be a Prodigal's Favorite—then, worse
truth,
A Miser's Pensioner—behold our lot!
O Man, that from thy fair and shining
youth
Age might but take the things Youth
needed not!

ELEGIAC STANZAS

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE,
IN A STORM, PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE
BEAUMONT⁴

I WAS thy neighbor once, thou rugged Pile!
Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee:⁵
I saw thee every day; and all the while
Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air!
So like, so very like, was day to day!
When'er I looked, thy Image still was there;
It trembled, but it never passed away.

⁴Written in 1805, published in 1807. The Peele Castle here referred to (there are two) is in Lancashire. Wordsworth's friend Beaumont painted two pictures of the Castle, one of them intended for Mrs. Wordsworth.

⁵A reference to a visit paid by Wordsworth during a college vacation to his cousin, Mrs. Barker, who lived at Rampside, not far from Peele Castle.

How perfect was the calm! it seemed no sleep;
No mood, which season takes away, or brings:

I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.

Ah! *then*, if mine had been the Painter's hand,
To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,
The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile
Amid a world how different from this!
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss.

Thou shouldst have seemed a treasure-house
divine
Of peaceful years; a chronicle of heaven;—
Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease,
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;
No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
Such Picture would I at that time have made:

And seen the soul of truth in every part,
A steadfast peace that might not be betrayed.

So once it would have been,—'tis so no more;

I have submitted to a new control:
A power is gone, which nothing can restore;
A deep distress hath humanized my Soul.¹

Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea, and be what I have been:
The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old;
This, which I know, I speak with mind serene.

Then, Beaumont, Friend! who would have been the Friend,
If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,
This work of thine I blame not, but commend;
This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

O 'tis a passionate Work!—yet wise and well,
Well chosen is the spirit that is here;
That Hulk which labors in the deadly swell,
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear!

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime
I love to see the look with which it braves,
Cased in the unfeeling armor of old time,
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,
Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind!
Such happiness, wherever it be known,
Is to be pitied; for 'tis surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights of what is to be borne!
Such sights, or worse, as are before me here.—
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

ODE TO DUTY²

STERN Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot;
Who do thy work, and know it not:
Oh! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power!
around them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,

¹Wordsworth's brother, Captain John Wordsworth, went down with his ship, an East Indiaman, off the Bill of Portland on 5 February, 1805.

²Written in 1805, published in 1807. "This ode is on the model of Gray's *Ode to Adversity*" (Wordsworth, *Fenwick Note*).

Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their
need.

I, loving freedom, and untried;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if
I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
My hopes no more must change their
name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.¹

*Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through
Thee, are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let
me live!

¹In the edition of 1807 a stanza here followed which was omitted in all later editions:

Yet not the less would I throughout
Still act according to the voice
Of my own wish; and feel past doubt
That my submissiveness was choice:
Not seeking in the school of pride
For "precepts over dignified,"
Denial and restraint I prize
No farther than they breed a second Will more wise.

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR²

Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
—It is the generous Spirit, who, when
brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish
thought:
Whose high endeavors are an inward light
That makes the path before him always
bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to
learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care;
Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes,
bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good re-
ceives:
By objects, which might force the soul to
abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate;
Is placable—because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;

²Written in December, 1805, or January, 1806; published in 1807. "The course of the great war with the French naturally fixed one's attention upon the military character, and, to the honor of our country, there were many illustrious instances of the qualities that constitute its highest excellence. Lord Nelson carried most of the virtues that the trials he was exposed to in his department of the service necessarily call forth and sustain, if they do not produce the contrary vices. But his public life was stained with one great crime, so that though many passages of these lines were suggested by what was generally known as excellent in his conduct, I have not been able to connect his name with the poem as I could wish, or even to think of him with satisfaction in reference to the idea of what a warrior ought to be. . . . I will add that many elements of the character here portrayed were found in my brother John, who perished by shipwreck" (Wordsworth, *Fenwick Note*). But in 1807 Wordsworth had connected Nelson's name with this poem, in the following note: "The above Verses were written soon after tidings had been received of the death of Lord Nelson, which event directed the Author's thoughts to the subject. His respect for the memory of his great fellow-countryman induces him to mention this; though he is well aware that the Verses must suffer from any connection in the reader's mind with a name so illustrious."

More skillful in self-knowledge, even more
pure,

As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.

—'Tis he whose law is reason; who de-
pends

Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted
still

To evil for a guard against worse ill,

And what in quality or act is best

Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,

He labors good on good to fix, and owes

To virtue every triumph that he knows:

—Who, if he rise to station of command,

Rises by open means; and there will stand

On honorable terms, or else retire,

And in himself possess his own desire;

Who comprehends his trust, and to the same

Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;

And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in
wait

For wealth, or honors, or for worldly
state;

Whom they must follow; on whose head
must fall,

Like showers of manna, if they come at all:

Whose powers shed round him in the com-
mon strife,

Or mild concerns of ordinary life,

A constant influence, a peculiar grace;

But who, if he be called upon to face

Some awful moment to which Heaven has
joined

Great issues, good or bad for human kind,

Is happy as a Lover; and attired

With sudden brightness, like a Man inspired;

And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the
law

In calmness made, and sees what he fore-
saw;

Or if an unexpected call succeed,

Come when it will, is equal to the need:

—He who, though thus endued as with a
sense

And faculty for storm and turbulence,

Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans

To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes;

Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,

Are at his heart; and such fidelity

It is his darling passion to approve;

More brave for this, that he hath much to
love:—

'Tis, finally, the Man, who, lifted high,
Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
Or left unthought-of in obscurity,—
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not—
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be
won:

Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;

Who, not content that former worth stand
fast,

Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpassed:

Who, whether praise of him must walk the
earth

For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,

Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,

And leave a dead unprofitable name—

Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;

And, while the mortal mist is gathering,
draws

His breath in confidence of Heaven's ap-
please:

This is the happy Warrior; this is He

That every Man in arms should wish to be.

A COMPLAINT¹

THERE is a change—and I am poor;

Your love hath been, not long ago,

A fountain at my fond heart's door,

Whose only business was to flow;

And flow it did; not taking heed

Of its own bounty, or my need.

What happy moments did I count!

Bless'd was I then all bliss above!

Now, for that consecrated fount

Of murmuring, sparkling, living love,

What have I? shall I dare to tell?

A comfortless and hidden well.

A well of love—it may be deep—

I trust it is,—and never dry:

What matter? if the waters sleep

In silence and obscurity.

—Such change, and at the very door

Of my fond heart, hath made me poor.

¹Written in 1806, published in 1807. "Suggested by a change in the manner of a friend" (Wordsworth, *Fenswick Note*). The friend was probably Coleridge.

NUNS FRET NOT AT THEIR CONVENT'S NARROW ROOM¹

NUNS fret not at their convent's narrow room;

And hermits are contented with their cells;
And students with their pensive citadels;²
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,

High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,³
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:
In truth the prison, into which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,
In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs
must be)

Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

PERSONAL TALK⁴

I

I AM not One who much or oft delight
To season my fireside with personal talk,—
Of friends, who live within an easy walk,
Or neighbors, daily, weekly, in my sight:
And, for my chance-acquaintance, ladies
bright,
Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk,
These all wear out of me, like Forms, with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast-night.
Better than such discourse doth silence long,
Long, barren silence, square with my desire;

To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage-fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint undersong.

¹Published in 1807.

²Retreats secure for uninterrupted thought.

³The hill country east of the Duddon, south of the Brathay, and west of Windermere.

⁴Published in 1807.

II

"Yet life," you say, "is life; we have seen
and see,

And with a living pleasure we describe;
And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
The languid mind into activity.
Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and
glee

Are fostered by the comment and the gibe."
Even be it so; yet still among your tribe,
Our daily world's true Worldlings, rank not
me!

Children are bless'd, and powerful; their
world lies

More justly balanced; partly at their feet,
And part far from them:—sweetest melodies
Are those that are by distance made more
sweet;

Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,
He is a Slave; the meanest we can meet!

III

Wings have we,—and as far as we can go,
We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that
mood

Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
Dreams, books, are each a world; and books,
we know,

Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh
and blood,

Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There find I personal themes, a plenteous
store,

Matter wherein right voluble I am,
To which I listen with a ready ear;
Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear,—
The gentle Lady married to the Moor;⁵
And heavenly Una with her milk-white
Lamb.⁶

IV

Nor can I not believe but that hereby
Great gains are mine; for thus I live remote
From evil-speaking; rancor, never sought,
Comes to me not; malignant truth, or lie.
Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joy-
ous thought:

And thus from day to day my little boat

⁵Desdemona, in *Othello*.

⁶Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, Bk. I.

Rocks in its harbor, lodging peaceably.
 Blessings be with them—and eternal praise,
 Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares—
 The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
 Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!
 Oh! might my name be numbered among
 theirs,
 Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US¹

THE world is too much with us; late and
 soon,
 Getting and spending, we lay waste our
 powers:

Little we see in Nature that is ours;
 We have given our hearts away, a sordid
 boon!

The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
 The winds that will be howling at all hours,
 And are up-gathered now like sleeping
 flowers;

For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
 It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
 A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
 So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
 Have glimpses that would make me less
 forlorn;

Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathéd horn.

ODE

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM REC-
 OLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD²

The Child is father of the Man;
 And I could wish my days to be
 Bound each to each by natural piety.

I

THERE was a time when meadow, grove,
 and stream,
 The earth, and every common sight,
 To me did seem
 Appareled in celestial light,
 The glory and the freshness of a dream.

¹Published in 1807.

²Written in the years from 1803, or possibly 1802, to 1806; published in 1807. Concerning the meaning of this poem see the introductory note to Wordsworth's poems, above, where part of the *Fenwick Note* to the *Ode* is quoted.

It is not now as it hath been of yore;—

Turn wheresoe'er I may,

By night or day,

The things which I have seen I now can see
 no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes,
 And lovely is the Rose,
 The Moon doth with delight
 Look round her when the heavens are bare,
 Waters on a starry night
 Are beautiful and fair;
 The sunshine is a glorious birth;
 But yet I know, where'er I go,
 That there hath passed away a glory from
 the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
 And while the young lambs bound
 As to the tabor's³ sound,
 To me alone there came a thought of grief:
 A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
 And I again am strong:
 The cataracts blow their trumpets from the
 steep;
 Nor more shall grief of mine the season
 wrong;⁴
 I hear the Echoes through the mountains
 throng,
 The Winds come to me from the fields of
 sleep,
 And all the earth is gay;
 Land and sea
 Give themselves up to jollity,
 And with the heart of May
 Doth every Beast keep holiday;—
 Thou Child of Joy,
 Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts,
 thou happy Shepherd-boy!

IV

Ye blesséd Creatures, I have heard the call
 Ye to each other make; I see
 The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
 My heart is at your festival,
 My head hath its coronal,⁵
 The fullness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
 Oh evil day! if I were sullen

³Small drum.

⁴*I. e.*, by lack of sympathy.

⁵Garland.

While Earth herself is adorning,
 This sweet May-morning,
 And the Children are culling
 On every side,
 In a thousand valleys far and wide,
 Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
 And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's
 arm:—
 I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
 —But there's a Tree, of many, one,
 A single Field which I have looked upon,
 Both of them speak of something that is
 gone:
 The Pansy at my feet
 Doth the same tale repeat:
 Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
 Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

v

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
 The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar:
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home:
 Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy,
 But He beholds the light, and whence it
 flows,
 He sees it in his joy;
 The Youth, who daily farther from the east
 Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended;
 At length the Man perceives it die away,
 And fade into the light of common day.

vi

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her
 own;
 Yearnings she hath in her own natural
 kind,
 And, even with something of a Mother's
 mind,
 And no unworthy aim,
 The homely Nurse doth all she can
 To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
 Forget the glories he hath known,
 And that imperial palace whence he came.

vii

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
 A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!
 See, where 'mid work of his own hand he
 lies,
 Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
 With light upon him from his father's eyes!
 See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
 Some fragment from his dream of human
 life,
 Shaped by himself with newly-learnéd art;
 A wedding or a festival,
 A mourning or a funeral;
 And this hath now his heart,
 And unto this he frames his song:
 Then will he fit his tongue
 To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
 But it will not be long
 Ere this be thrown aside,
 And with new joy and pride
 The little Actor cons another part;
 Filling from time to time his "humorous
 stage"¹
 With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
 That Life brings with her in her equipage;
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

viii

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 Thy Soul's immensity;
 Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
 Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
 That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal
 deep,
 Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
 Mighty Prophet! Seer bless'd!
 On whom those truths do rest,
 Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
 In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
 Thou, over whom thy Immortality
 Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
 A Presence which is not to be put by;
 Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
 Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's
 height,
 Why with such earnest pains dost thou
 provoke
 The years to bring the inevitable yoke,

¹The allusion in these lines is to the speech beginning
 "All the world's a stage," in *As You Like It*, II, vii, 139-
 166. Humorous here means, moody.

Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly
freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth
breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be bless'd—
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his
breast:—
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts before which our mortal
Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to
make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling ever-
more.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous
song!
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once
so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the
flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through¹ death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and
Groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the Brooks which down their channels
fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as
they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet;
The Clouds that gather round the setting
sun
Do take a sober coloring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms
are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we
live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can
give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

¹Beyond.

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND¹

Two Voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty Voice:
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly
striven:

Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art
driven,

Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is
left;

For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would
it be

That Mountain floods should thunder as
before,

And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!

YARROW VISITED SEPTEMBER, 1814²

AND is this—Yarrow?—*This* the Stream
Of which my fancy cherished,
So faithfully, a waking dream?
An image that hath perished!
O that some Minstrel's harp were near,
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!

Yet why?—a silvery current flows
With uncontrolled meanderings;
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed, in all my wanderings.

¹Written probably in 1807, and published in the same year. Switzerland was conquered by France in 1798. By the time this sonnet was written Napoleon had made himself master of Europe, and England remained his only unconquered opponent.

²Written in 1814, published in 1815. "I seldom read or think of this poem without regretting that my dear Sister was not of the party [which included the Ettrick Shepherd, James Hogg], as she would have had so much delight in recalling the time when, traveling together in Scotland, we declined going in search of this celebrated stream, not altogether, I will frankly confess, for the reasons assigned in the poem on the occasion" (Wordsworth, *Fenswick Note*). See *Yarrow Unvisited*, above.

And, through her depths, Saint Mary's Lake
Is visibly delighted;
For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
A tender hazy brightness;
Mild dawn of promise! that excludes
All profitless dejection;
Though not unwilling here to admit
A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous Flower
Of Yarrow Vale³ lay bleeding?
His bed perchance was yon smooth mound
On which the herd is feeding:
And haply from this crystal pool,
Now peaceful as the morning,
The Water-wraith ascended thrice
And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the Lay that sings
The haunts of happy Lovers,
The path that leads them to the grove,
The leafy grove that covers:
And Pity sanctifies the Verse
That paints, by strength of sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of love;
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow!

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation:
Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy;
The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.

That region left, the vale unfolds
Rich groves of lofty stature,
With Yarrow winding through the pomp
Of cultivated nature;
And, rising from those lofty groves,
Behold a Ruin hoary!
The shattered front of Newark's Towers,⁴
Renowned in Border story.

³The "real" Flower of Yarrow was Mary Scott of Dryhope, but Wordsworth's allusion is to Logan's ballad, *The Braes of Yarrow*, in which the lady laments her dead lover as the "flower of Yarrow," and in which

"Thrice did the water-wraith ascend,
And gave a doleful groan through Yarrow."

⁴About three miles from Selkirk.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
 For sportive youth to stray in;
 For manhood to enjoy his strength;
 And age to wear away in!
 Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,
 A covert for protection
 Of tender thoughts, that nestle there—
 The brood of chaste affection.

How sweet, on this autumnal day,
 The wild-wood fruits to gather,
 And on my True-love's forehead plant
 A crest of blooming heather!
 And what if I enwreathed my own!
 'Twere no offense to reason;
 The sober Hills thus deck their brows
 To meet the wintry season.

I see—but not by sight alone,
 Loved Yarrow, have I won thee;
 A ray of fancy still survives—
 Her sunshine plays upon thee!
 Thy ever-youthful waters keep
 A course of lively pleasure;
 And gladsome notes my lips can breathe,
 Accordant to the measure.

The vapors linger round the Heights,
 They melt, and soon must vanish;
 One hour is theirs, nor more is mine—
 Sad thought which I would banish,
 But that I know, where'er I go,
 Thy genuine image, Yarrow!
 Will dwell with me—to heighten joy,
 And cheer my mind in sorrow.

LAODAMIA¹

"WITH sacrifice before the rising morn
 Vows have I made by fruitless hope inspired;
 And from the infernal Gods, 'mid shades
 forlorn
 Of night, my slaughtered Lord have I re-
 quired:
 Celestial pity I again implore;—
 Restore him to my sight—great Jove, re-
 store!"

¹Written in 1814, published in 1815. "The incident of the trees growing and withering [mentioned in the concluding lines of the poem] put the subject into my thoughts, and I wrote with the hope of giving it a loftier tone than, so far as I know, has been given to it by any of the Ancients who have treated of it. It cost me more trouble than almost anything of equal length I have ever written" (Wordsworth, *Fenwick Note*).

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
 With faith, the Suppliant heavenward lifts
 her hands;
 While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
 Her countenance brightens—and her eye
 expands;
 Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature
 grows;
 And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror! what hath she perceived?—O joy!
 What doth she look on?—whom doth she
 behold?
 Her Hero slain upon the beach of Troy?
 His vital presence? his corporeal mold?
 It is—if sense deceive her not—'tis He!
 And a God leads him, wingéd Mercury!

Mild Hermes spake—and touched her with
 his wand
 That calms all fear; "Such grace hath
 crowned thy prayer,
 Laodamia! that at Jove's command
 Thy Husband walks the paths of upper
 air:
 He comes to tarry with thee three hours'
 space;
 Accept the gift, behold him face to face!"

Forth sprang the impassioned Queen her
 Lord to clasp;
 Again that consummation she essayed;
 But unsubstantial Form eludes her grasp
 As often as that eager grasp was made.
 The Phantom parts—but parts to re-unite,
 And re-assume his place before her sight.

"Protesiláus, lo! thy guide is gone!
 Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice:
 This is our palace,—yonder is thy throne;
 Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will
 rejoice.
 Not to appal me have the gods bestowed
 This precious boon; and blessed a sad abode."

"Great Jove, Laodamia! doth not leave
 His gifts imperfect:—Specter though I be,
 I am not sent to scare thee or deceive;
 But in reward of thy fidelity.
 And something also did my worth obtain;
 For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

"Thou knowest, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan strand
Should die; but me the threat could not withhold:

A generous cause a victim did demand;
And forth I leaped upon the sandy plain;
A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain."

"Supreme of Heroes—bravest, noblest, best!
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
Which then, when tens of thousands were depressed
By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore;
Thou found'st—and I forgive thee—here thou art—
A nobler counselor than my poor heart.

"But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
Thou shouldst elude the malice of the grave:
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian air.

"No Specter greets me,—no vain Shadow this;
Come, blooming Hero, place thee by my side!
Give, on this well-known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day, a second time thy bride!"
Jove frowned in heaven; the conscious Parcae¹ threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

"This visage tells thee that my doom is past:
Nor should the change be mourned, even if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish. Earth destroys
Those raptures duly—Erebus² disdains:
Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.

"Be taught, O faithful Consort, to control
Rebellious passion: for the Gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul;
A fervent, not ungovernable, love.
Thy transports moderate; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn—"

¹Fates.

²Hades

"Ah, wherefore?—Did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian Monster of the tomb

Alcestis, a reanimated corse,
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom?³

Medea's spells dispersed the weight of years,
And Æson stood a youth 'mid youthful peers.⁴

"The Gods to us are merciful—and they
Yet further may relent: for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic potent over sun and star,
Is love, though oft to agony distressed,
And though his favorite seat be feeble woman's breast.

"But if thou goest, I follow—" "Peace!"
he said,—
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered;
The ghastly color from his lips had fled;
In his deportment, shape, and mien, appeared
Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
Brought from a pensive, though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as Spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
The past unsighed for, and the future sure;
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued;

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the Soul shall enter which hath earned
That privilege by virtue.—"Ill," said he,
"The end of man's existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry

³This is the theme of the *Alcestis* of Euripides.

⁴See Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VII, 159-293. Æson was the father of Jason.

Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight,
While tears were thy best pastime, day and night;

"And while my youthful peers before my eyes
(Each hero following his peculiar bent)
Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
By martial sports,—or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in council were detained;
What time the fleet at Aulis¹ lay enchained.

"The wished-for wind was given:—I then revolved
The oracle, upon the silent sea;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
The foremost prow in pressing to the strand,—
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

"Yet bitter, oft-times bitter, was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, beloved Wife!
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life,—
The paths which we had trod—these fountains, flowers,
My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

"But should suspense permit the Foe to cry,
"Behold they tremble!—haughty their array,
Yet of their number no one dares to die?"
In soul I swept the indignity away:
Old frailties then recurred:—but lofty thought,
In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

"And Thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
In reason, in self-government too slow;

¹A port in Bœotia. There the Greek fleet was held until Iphigenia was sacrificed to appease Artemis.

I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
Our bless'd re-union in the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sympathized;
Be thy affections raised and solemnized.

"Learn, by a mortal yearning, to ascend—
Seeking a higher object. Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end;
For this the passion to excess was driven—
That self might be annulled: her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love."—

Aloud she shrieked! for Hermes re-appears!
Round the dear Shade she would have clung
—'tis vain:

The hours are past—too brief had they been years;
And him no mortal effort can detain:
Swift, toward the realms that know not earthly day,
He through the portal takes his silent way,
And on the palace-floor a lifeless corse She lay.

Thus, all in vain exhorted and reproved,
She perished; and, as for a willful crime,
By the just Gods whom no weak pity moved,
Was doomed to wear out her appointed time,
Apart from happy Ghosts, that gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

—Yet tears to human suffering are due;
And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
Are mourned by man, and not by man alone,
As fondly he believes.—Upon the side
Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
From out the tomb of him for whom she died;
And ever, when such stature they had gained
That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
The trees' tall summits withered at the sight,
A constant interchange of growth and blight!

AFTER-THOUGHT, AP- PENDED TO *THE RIVER* *DUDDON*¹

I THOUGHT of Thee, my partner and my
guide,
As being passed away.—Vain sympathies!
For, backward, Duddon, as I cast my eyes,
I see what was, and is, and will abide;
Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever
glide,
The Form remains, the Function never dies,
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the
wise,
We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
The elements, must vanish,—be it so!
Enough, if something from our hands have
power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour,
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's
transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know.

MUTABILITY²

FROM low to high doth dissolution climb,
And sink from high to low, along a scale
Of awful notes, whose concord shall not
fail;
A musical but melancholy chime,
Which they can hear who meddle not with
crime,
Nor avarice, nor over-anxious care.
Truth fails not; but her outward forms that
bear
The longest date do melt like frosty rime,
That in the morning whitened hill and plain
And is no more; drop like the tower sub-
lime
Of yesterday, which royally did wear
His crown of weeds, but could not even
sustain
Some casual shout that broke the silent air,
Or the unimaginable touch of Time.

¹Published in 1820. This is the final sonnet of a series entitled *The River Duddon*. This stream rises on the borders of Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Lancashire, and flows between the latter two counties into the Irish Sea.

²This and the three following sonnets are from *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, published in 1822. Most of the sonnets in the series were written in 1821.

INSIDE OF KING'S COL- LEGE CHAPEL, CAM- BRIDGE³

TAX not the royal Saint with vain expense,
With ill-matched aims the Architect who
planned—
Albeit laboring for a scanty band
Of white robed Scholars only—this im-
mense
And glorious Work of fine intelligence!
Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the
lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more;
So deemed the man who fashioned for the
sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching
roof
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand
cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music
dwells
Lingering—and wandering on as loath to
die;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yield-
eth proof
That they were born for immortality.

THE SAME

WHAT awful perspective! while from our
sight
With gradual stealth the lateral windows
hide
Their Portraitures, their stone-work glim-
mers, dyed
In the soft checkerings of a sleepy light.
Martyr, or King, or sainted Eremite,
Whoe'er ye be, that thus, yourselves unseen,
Imbue your prison-bars with solemn sheen,
Shine on, until ye fade with coming Night!—
But, from the arms of silence—list! O list!
The music bursteth into second life;
The notes luxuriate, every stone is kissed
By sound, or ghost of sound, in mazy strife;
Heart-thrilling strains, that cast, before the
eye
Of the devout, a veil of ecstasy!

³The College was founded (in 1441) and the chapel built by Henry VI, who was never actually canonized but who was worshiped as a martyr and saint. The scholars for whom the Chapel was built were clerks of St. Nicholas.

CONTINUED

THEY dreamt not of a perishable home
 Who thus could build. Be mine, in hours of
 fear
 Or groveling thought, to seek a refuge here;
 Or through the aisles of Westminster¹ to
 roam:
 Where bubbles burst, and folly's dancing
 foam
 Melts, if it cross the threshold; where the
 wreath
 Of awe-struck wisdom droops: or let my path
 Lead to that younger Pile,² whose sky-like
 dome
 Hath typified by reach of daring art
 Infinity's embrace; whose guardian crest,
 The silent Cross, among the stars shall
 spread
 As now, when She hath also seen her breast
 Filled with mementos, satiate with its part
 Of grateful England's overflowing Dead.

TO ———³

O DEARER far than light and life are dear,
 Full oft our human foresight I deplore;
 Trembling, through my unworthiness, with
 fear
 That friends, by death disjoined, may meet
 no more!

Misgivings, hard to vanquish or control,
 Mix with the day, and cross the hour of rest;
 While all the future, for thy purer soul,
 With "sober certainties"⁴ of love is bless'd.

That sigh of thine, not meant for human ear,
 Tells that these words thy humbleness of-
 fend;

Yet bear me up—else faltering in the rear
 Of a steep march: support me to the end.

Peace settles where the intellect is meek,
 And Love is dutiful in thought and deed;
 Through Thee communion with that Love
 I seek:

The faith Heaven strengthens where *he*
 molds the Creed.

¹Westminster Abbey.

²St. Paul's Cathedral, built in the seventeenth century
 by Sir Christopher Wren.

³Written in 1824; published in 1827. Addressed to
 Mrs. Wordsworth.

⁴Comus, l. 264.

TO A SKYLARK⁵

ETHEREAL minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
 Dost thou despise the earth where cares
 abound?
 Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and
 eye
 Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
 Thy nest which thou canst drop into at
 will,
 Those quivering wings composed, that mu-
 sic still!

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
 A privacy of glorious light is thine;
 Whence thou dost pour upon the world a
 flood
 Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
 Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
 True to the kindred points of Heaven and
 Home!

SCORN NOT THE SONNET⁶

SCORN not the Sonnet; Critic, you have
 frowned,
 Mindless of its just honors; with this key
 Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody
 Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's
 wound;⁷

A thousand times this pipe did Tasso⁸ sound;
 With it Camöens⁹ soothed an exile's grief;
 The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
 Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
 His visionary brow:¹⁰ a glow-worm lamp,
 It cheered mild Spenser,¹¹ called from Faery-
 land

To struggle through dark ways; and, when a
 damp

Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
 The Thing became a trumpet; whence he
 blew

Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

⁵Written in 1825, published in 1827.

⁶Published in 1827.

⁷In his series of sonnets inspired by Laura. Petrarch
 (1304–1374) was a humanist and poet of the Italian
 Renaissance.

⁸Italian poet (1544–1595).

⁹Portuguese poet (1524–1580).

¹⁰Many of Dante's sonnets are to be found in his *Vita
 Nuova*.

¹¹Spenser's series of sonnets is entitled *Amoretti*.

YARROW REVISITED ¹

THE gallant Youth, who may have gained,
Or seeks, a "winsome Marrow,"²
Was but an Infant in the lap
When first I looked on Yarrow;
Once more, by Newark's Castle-gate
Long left without a warder,
I stood, looked, listened, and with Thee,
Great Minstrel of the Border!

Grave thoughts ruled wide on that sweet
day,
Their dignity installing
In gentle bosoms, while sere leaves
Were on the bough, or falling;
But breezes played, and sunshine gleamed—
The forest to embolden;
Reddened the fiery hues, and shot
Transparence through the golden.

For busy thoughts the Stream flowed on
In foamy agitation;
And slept in many a crystal pool
For quiet contemplation:
No public and no private care
• The freeborn mind enthralling,
We made a day of happy hours,
Our happy days recalling.

Brisk Youth appeared, the Morn of youth,
With freaks of graceful folly,—
Life's temperate Noon, her sober Eve,
Her Night not melancholy;
Past, present, future, all appeared
In harmony united,
Like guests that meet, and some from far,
By cordial love invited.

And if, as Yarrow, through the woods
And down the meadow ranging,
Did meet us with unaltered face,
Though we were changed and changing;

¹Written in 1831, published in 1835. "In the autumn of 1831, my daughter and I set off from Rydal to visit Sir Walter Scott before his departure for Italy. . . . How sadly changed did I find him from the man I had seen so healthy, gay, and hopeful, a few years before. . . . On Tuesday morning Sir Walter Scott accompanied us and most of the party to Newark Castle on the Yarrow. When we alighted from the carriages he walked pretty stoutly, and had great pleasure in revisiting those his favorite haunts. Of that occasion the verses *Yarrow Revisited* are a memorial" (Wordsworth, *Fenwick Note*).

²See *Yarrow Unvisited* and *Yarrow Visited*, above.

If, *then*, some natural shadows spread
Our inward prospect over,
The soul's deep valley was not slow
Its brightness to recover.

Eternal blessings on the Muse,
And her divine employment!
The blameless Muse, who trains her Sons
For hope and calm enjoyment;
Albeit sickness, lingering yet,
Has o'er their pillow brooded;
And Care waylays their steps—a Sprite
Not easily eluded.

For thee, O SCOTT! compelled to change
Green Eildon-hill and Cheviot
For warm Vesuvio's vine-clad slopes;
And leave thy Tweed and Tiviot
For mild Sorrento's breezy waves;
May classic Fancy, linking
With native Fancy her fresh aid,
Preserve thy heart from sinking!

Oh! while they minister to thee,
Each vying with the other,
May Health return to mellow Age
With Strength, her venturous brother;
And Tiber, and each brook and rill
Renowned in song and story,
With unimagined beauty shine,
Nor lose one ray of glory!

For Thou, upon a hundred streams,
By tales of love and sorrow,
Of faithful love, undaunted truth,
Hast shed the power of Yarrow;
And streams unknown, hills yet unseen,
Wherever they invite Thee,
At parent Nature's grateful call,
With gladness must requite Thee.

A gracious welcome shall be thine,
Such looks of love and honor
As thy own Yarrow gave to me
When first I gazed upon her;
Beheld what I had feared to see,
Unwilling to surrender
Dreams treasured up from early days,
The holy and the tender.

And what, for this frail world, were all
That mortals do or suffer,
Did no responsive harp, no pen,
Memorial tribute offer?

Yea, what were mighty Nature's self?
 Her features, could they win us,
 Unhelped by the poetic voice
 That hourly speaks within us?

Nor deem that localized Romance
 Plays false with our affections;
 Unsanctifies our tears—made sport
 For fanciful dejections:
 Ah, no! the visions of the past
 Sustain the heart in feeling
 Life as she is—our changeful Life,
 With friends and kindred dealing.

Bear witness, Ye, whose thoughts that day
 In Yarrow's groves were centered;
 Who through the silent portal arch
 Of moldering Newark entered;
 And clomb the winding stair that once
 Too timidly was mounted
 By the "last Minstrel,"¹ (not the last!)
 Ere he his Tale recounted.

Flow on for ever, Yarrow Stream!
 Fulfill thy pensive duty,
 Well pleased that future Bards should chant
 For simple hearts thy beauty;
 To dream-light dear while yet unseen,
 Dear to the common sunshine,
 And dearer still, as now I feel,
 To memory's shadowy moonshine!

THE TROSACHS²

THERE'S not a nook within this solemn Pass,
 But were an apt confessional for One
 Taught by his summer spent, his autumn
 gone,
 That Life is but a tale of morning grass
 Withered at eve. From scenes of art which
 chase

¹See Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, ll. 31-32.

²Written in 1831, published in 1835 (No. vi of the series entitled *Yarrow Revisited*). The Trosachs is a wooded valley in Perthshire.

That thought away, turn, and with watchful
 eyes
 Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities,
 Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear
 than glass
 Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice happy
 quest,
 If from a golden perch of aspen spray
 (October's workmanship to rival May)
 The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
 That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught lay,
 Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest!

MOST SWEET IT IS WITH UNUPLIFTED EYES³

Most sweet it is with unuplifted eyes
 To pace the ground, if path be there or none,
 While a fair region round the traveler lies
 Which he forbears again to look upon;
 Pleased rather with some soft ideal scene,
 The work of Fancy, or some happy tone
 Of meditation, slipping in between
 The beauty coming and the beauty gone.
 If Thought and Love desert us, from that
 day
 Let us break off all commerce with the
 Muse:
 With Thought and Love companions of our
 way,
 Whate'er the senses take or may refuse,
 The Mind's internal heaven shall shed her
 dews
 Of inspiration on the humblest lay.

IF THIS GREAT WORLD OF JOY AND PAIN⁴

IF THIS great world of joy and pain
 Revolve in one sure track;
 If freedom, set, will rise again,
 And virtue, flown, come back;
 Woe to the purblind crew who fill
 The heart with each day's care;
 Nor gain, from past or future, skill
 To bear, and to forbear!

³Written in 1833, published in 1835.

⁴Written in 1833, published in 1835.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772-1834)

Coleridge, the son of a clergyman of the Church of England, was born at Ottery St. Mary, in Devonshire, on 21 October, 1772. His early childhood clearly foreshadowed his later development. "I read," he says, speaking of his boyhood, "every book that came in my way without distinction; and my father was fond of me, and used to take me on his knee, and hold long conversations with me. I remember, when eight years old, walking with him one winter's evening from a farmer's house, a mile from Ottery; and he then told me the names of the stars, and how Jupiter was a thousand times larger than our world, and that the other twinkling stars were suns that had worlds rolling round them; and when I came home he showed me how they rolled round. I heard him with a profound delight and admiration, but without the least mixture of wonder or incredulity. For from my early reading of fairy tales and about genii, and the like, my mind had been habituated to *the Vast*; and I never regarded my *senses* in any way as the *criteria* of my belief. I regulated all my creeds by my conceptions, not by my sight, even at that age." Coleridge, in other words, was born with a sense of immaterial reality, and this he never lost. From 1782 until 1790 he was at Christ's Hospital, where began his lifelong friendship with Charles Lamb. And as Lamb later sketched his school-fellow we see still the same Coleridge who as a boy of eight regulated his creeds by his conceptions, not by his sight: "Come back into memory, like as thou wert in the dayspring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee—the dark pillar not yet turned—Samuel Taylor Coleridge—Logician, Metaphysician, Bard!—How have I seen the casual passer through the Cloisters stand still, entranced with admiration . . . to hear thee unfold, in thy deep and sweet intonations, the mysteries of Jamblichus, or Plotinus (for even in those years thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts), or reciting Homer in his Greek, or Pindar—while the walls of the old Gray Friars re-echoed to the accents of the *inspired charity-boy!*" From Christ's Hospital Coleridge proceeded to Jesus College, Cambridge. There he became a radical in politics, as a result of ardor for the French Revolution, continued to read everything he could lay hands on—including notably Hartley's *Observations*, which converted him to necessitarianism for a time—accumulated debts, and suffered disappointment in love. Then after two years of Cambridge he suddenly enlisted in a regiment of dragoons, but found inside of four months that a soldier's life was not for him. Consequently he went back to Cambridge, but began also to plan, with Robert Southey, then a student at Oxford, the foundation of an ideal community along the banks of the Susquehanna in America. The plan, of course, fell through, but it did result in the marriage of Coleridge and Southey to the two Miss Frickers, who were to have been fellow-members of the American Pantisocracy. Coleridge's marriage proved unhappy. His would have been a difficult nature in any household, and it was doubtless the more so in one ill-provided with money. In later years he lived apart from his wife and children.

In 1796 Coleridge met Wordsworth, and each made a profound impression on the other. In the following year they were much together, and there opened for both of them the period when their greatest poetry was written. Coleridge in his *Biographia Literaria* tells how, "during the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbors, our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colors of imagination. The sudden charm, which accidents of light and shade, which moon-light or sun-set diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both. These are the poetry of nature. The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions, as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. . . . For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity, where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them, when they present themselves. In this idea originated the plan of the *Lyrical Ballads*; in which it was agreed, that my endeavors should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling

analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand. With this view I wrote *The Ancient Mariner*, and was preparing among other poems, *The Dark Ladie* and the *Christabel*."

But, as Coleridge goes on to say, Wordsworth's industry proved greater than his, and *Christabel* was never finished, and *Lyrical Ballads* was published in 1798 with only four poems by Coleridge, though one of them was *The Ancient Mariner*, a contribution sufficiently notable for its quality to atone for many failures in industry. In the same year Coleridge and Wordsworth went to Germany, the former to study philosophy, and to find in German Transcendentalism the confirmation of much of his own earlier thought. Philosophy and religion had always been major interests with Coleridge, and after 1800 his attention was more and more absorbed into the effort to lay a solid philosophic foundation for Christianity, but neither this—the most famous unwritten book in English literature, as it has been called—nor other books ever saw the light. Some things were written, the essays composing *The Friend* (1809–1810), many articles for newspapers, *The Statesman's Manual* (1816), the *Biographia Literaria* (1817), *Aids to Reflection* (1825), *On the Constitution of the Church and State* (1830), and *The Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* (not published until 1840), but these were fragments only in comparison with what Coleridge thought he could do, and in comparison with what he might have done had he been more happily constituted.

In 1816 Coleridge was taken into the household of Dr. James Gillman of Highgate, and there he continued to live until his death on 25 July, 1834. Under Gillman's care he was partially cured of the opium habit, and his last years were years of comparative peace. They were also years in which Coleridge was regarded as little less than an oracle by a group of younger disciples who gathered round him at Highgate to hear his copious floods of extraordinary talk.

LOVE¹

ALL thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love;
And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking dreams do I
Live o'er again that happy hour;
When midway on the mount I lay,
Beside the ruined tower.

The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene
Had blended with the lights of eve;
And she was there, my hope, my joy,
My own dear Genevieve!

She leant against the arméd man,
The statue of the arméd knight;
She stood and listened to my lay,
Amid the lingering light.

Few sorrows hath she of her own.
My hope! my joy! my Genevieve!
She loves me best, whene'er I sing
The songs that make her grieve.

I played a soft and doleful air,
I sang an old and moving story—
An old rude song, that suited well
That ruin wild and hoary.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace;
For well she knew, I could not choose
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the Knight that wore
Upon his shield a burning brand;
And that for ten long years he wooed
The Lady of the Land.

I told her how he pined: and ah!
The deep, the low, the pleading tone
With which I sang another's love,
Interpreted my own.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes, and modest grace;
And she forgave me, that I gazed
Too fondly on her face!

But when I told the cruel scorn
That crazed that bold and lovely Knight,
And that he crossed the mountain-woods,
Nor rested day nor night;

¹First printed in 1799; written in that or the preceding year.

That sometimes from the savage den,
And sometimes from the darksome shade,
And sometimes starting up at once,
In green and sunny glade,—

There came and looked him in the face
An angel beautiful and bright;
And that he knew it was a Fiend,
This miserable Knight!

And that unknowing what he did,
He leaped amid a murderous band,
And saved from outrage worse than death
The Lady of the Land!

And how she wept, and clasped his knees;
And how she tended him in vain—
And ever strove to expiate
The scorn that crazed his brain;—

And that she nursed him in a cave;
And how his madness went away,
When on the yellow forest-leaves
A dying man he lay;—

His dying words—but when I reached
That tenderest strain of all the ditty,
My faltering voice and pausing harp
Disturbed her soul with pity!

All impulses of soul and sense
Had thrilled my guileless Genevieve;
The music and the doleful tale,
The rich and balmy eve;

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,
An undistinguishable throng,
And gentle wishes long subdued,
Subdued and cherished long!

She wept with pity and delight,
She blushed with love, and virgin-shame;
And like the murmur of a dream,
I heard her breathe my name.

Her bosom heaved—she stepped aside,
As conscious of my look she stepped—
Then suddenly, with timorous eye
She fled to me and wept.

She half enclosed me with her arms,
She pressed me with a meek embrace;

And bending back her head, looked up,
And gazed upon my face.

'Twas partly love, and partly fear,
And partly 'twas a bashful art,
That I might rather feel, than see,
The swelling of her heart.

I calmed her fears, and she was calm,
And told her love with virgin pride;
And so I won my Genevieve,
My bright and beauteous Bride.

KUBLA KHAN¹

IN XANADU did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And here were gardens bright with sinuous
rills
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing
tree,
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

¹Written in 1797 or 1798, published in 1816. In a preface (written in the third person) Coleridge explains its composition: "In consequence of a slight indisposition an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment that he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in *Purchas's Pilgrimage*: 'Here the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground were enclosed with a wall.' The author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; . . . On awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and, taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business . . . and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room found, to his no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away." Kubla Khan lived in the thirteenth century and was the founder of the Mongol dynasty in China. Khan, sometimes written Cham, is equivalent to "King." Xanadu (the form is Zaindu in *Purchas*) is a region in Tartary.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which
slanted

Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil
seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were
breathing,

A mighty fountain momentarily was forced,
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and
ever

It flung up momentarily the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to
man,

And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.

It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.¹
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

¹Professor Lane Cooper has suggested that this is a variant of Amara, the name of a mountain in Abyssinia on which, according to tradition, there was a terrestrial paradise like that of the Khan Kubla.

CHRISTABEL²

PART THE FIRST

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing
cock,

Tu—whit!—Tu—whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff bitch;
From her kennel beneath the rock
She maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the
hour;

Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is gray:
'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late,
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothed knight;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that's far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And naught was green upon the oak
But moss and rarest mistletoe:
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel!
It moaned as near, as near can be,
But what it is she cannot tell.—
On the other side it seems to be,
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

²The first part was written in 1797, the second in 1800, and the conclusion to the second part perhaps in 1801. Published in 1816.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek—
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmast twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Dressed in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone:
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare;
Her blue-veined feet unsandaled were;
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly!

"Mary mother, save me now!"
Said Christabel; "and who art thou?"

The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet:—
"Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness:
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear!"
Said Christabel, "How camest thou here?"
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet:—

"My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine:
Five warriors seized me yesternorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn:
They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.
They spurred amain, their steeds were white:
And once we crossed the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be;

Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain entranced, I wis)
Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive.
Some muttered words his comrades spoke:
He placed me underneath this oak;
He swore they would return with haste;
Whither they went I cannot tell—
I thought I heard, some minutes past,
Sounds as of a castle bell.
Stretch forth thy hand," thus ended she,
"And help a wretched maid to flee."

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand,
And comforted fair Geraldine:
"O well, bright dame! may you command
The service of Sir Leoline;
And gladly our stout chivalry
Will he send forth, and friends withal,
To guide and guard you safe and free
Home to your noble father's hall."

She rose: and forth with steps they passed
That strove to be, and were not, fast.
Her gracious stars the lady bless'd,
And thus spake on sweet Christabel:
"All our household are at rest,
The hall as silent as the cell;
Sir Leoline is weak in health,
And may not well awakened be,
But we will move as if in stealth;
And I beseech your courtesies,
This night, to share your couch with me."

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate;
The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle array had marched out.
The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate:¹
Then the lady rose again,
And moved, as she were not in pain.

¹The first intimation of Geraldine's real nature. It was formerly believed that evil spirits could not cross a Christian threshold. In the following stanza, again, Geraldine refuses to join in giving thanks to the Virgin Mary.

So free from danger, free from fear,
 They crossed the court: right glad they were.
 And Christabel devoutly cried
 To the lady by her side,
 "Praise we the Virgin all divine,
 Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!"
 "Alas, alas!" said Geraldine,
 "I cannot speak for weariness."
 So free from danger, free from fear,
 They crossed the court: right glad they
 were.

Outside her kennel, the mastiff old
 Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.
 The mastiff old did not awake,
 Yet she an angry moan did make!¹
 And what can ail the mastiff bitch?
 Never till now she uttered yell
 Beneath the eye of Christabel.
 Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch:
 For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,
 Pass as lightly as you will!
 The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
 Amid their own white ashes lying;
 But when the lady passed, there came
 A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
 And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
 And nothing else saw she thereby,
 Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline
 tall,
 Which hung in a murky old niche in the
 wall.
 "O softly tread," said Christabel,
 "My father seldom sleepeth well."

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,
 And jealous of the listening air
 They steal their way from stair to stair,
 Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
 And now they pass the Baron's room,
 As still as death, with stifled breath!
 And now have reached her chamber door;
 And now doth Geraldine press down
 The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air,
 And not a moonbeam enters here.
 But they without its light can see
 The chamber carved so curiously,

Carved with figures strange and sweet,
 All made out of the carver's brain,
 For a lady's chamber meet:
 The lamp with twofold silver chain
 Is fastened to an angel's feet.

The silver lamp burns dead and dim;
 But Christabel the lamp will trim.
 She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,
 And left it swinging to and fro,
 While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
 Sank down upon the floor below.

"O weary lady, Geraldine,
 I pray you, drink this cordial wine!
 It is a wine of virtuous powers;
 My mother made it of wild flowers."

"And will your mother pity me,
 Who am a maiden most forlorn?"
 Christabel answered—"Woe is me!
 She died the hour that I was born.
 I have heard the gray-haired friar tell
 How on her death-bed she did say,
 That she should hear the castle-bell
 Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
 O mother dear! that thou wert here!"
 "I would," said Geraldine, "she were!"
 But soon with altered voice, said she—
 "Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!
 I have power to bid thee flee."
 Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
 Why stares she with unsettled eye?
 Can she the bodiless dead espy?
 And why with hollow voice cries she,
 "Off, woman, off! this hour is mine—
 Though thou her guardian spirit be,
 Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me."

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
 And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—
 "Alas!" said she, "this ghastly ride—
 Dear lady! it hath wildered you!"
 The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
 And faintly said, "'Tis over now!"

Again the wild-flower wine she drank:
 Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
 And from the floor whereon she sank,
 The lofty lady stood upright:
 She was most beautiful to see,
 Like a lady of a far countree.

¹Animals were formerly supposed to have a sense which warned them of the presence of spirits. In the following stanza even the fire feels Geraldine's presence.

And thus the lofty lady spake—
 "All they who live in the upper sky,
 Do love you, holy Christabel!
 And you love them, and for their sake
 And for the good which me befell,
 Even I in my degree will try,
 Fair maiden, to requite you well.
 But now unrobe yourself; for I
 Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie."

Quoth Christabel, "So let it be!"
 And as the lady bade, did she.
 Her gentle limbs did she undress,
 And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and woe
 So many thoughts moved to and fro,
 That vain it were her lids to close;
 So half-way from the bed she rose,
 And on her elbow did recline
 To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
 And slowly rolled her eyes around;
 Then drawing in her breath aloud,
 Like one that shuddered, she unbound
 The cincture from beneath her breast:
 Her silken robe, and inner vest,
 Dropped to her feet, and full in view,
 Behold! her bosom and half her side—
 A sight to dream of, not to tell!
 O shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs;
 Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
 Deep from within she seems half-way
 To lift some weight with sick assay,
 And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
 Then suddenly, as one defied,
 Collects herself in scorn and pride,
 And lay down by the Maiden's side!—
 And in her arms the maid she took,
 Ah well-a-day!
 And with low voice and doleful look
 These words did say:

"In the touch of this bosom there worketh a
 spell,
 Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
 Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-
 morrow,
 This mark of my shame, this seal of my sor-
 row;

But vainly thou warrest,
 For this is alone in
 Thy power to declare,
 That in the dim forest
 Thou heard'st a low moaning,
 And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair;
 And didst bring her home with thee in love
 and in charity,
 To shield her and shelter her from the damp
 air."

THE CONCLUSION TO PART THE FIRST

It was a lovely sight to see
 The lady Christabel, when she
 Was praying at the old oak tree.
 Amid the jagged shadows
 Of mossy leafless boughs,
 Kneeling in the moonlight,
 To make her gentle vows;
 Her slender palms together pressed,
 Heaving sometimes on her breast;
 Her face resigned to bliss or bale—
 Her face, oh call it fair not pale,
 And both blue eyes more bright than clear,
 Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah woe is me!)
 Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
 Fearfully dreaming, yet, I wis,¹
 Dreaming that alone, which is—
 O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,
 The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree?
 And lo! the worker of these harms,
 That holds the maiden in her arms,
 Seems to slumber still and mild,
 As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
 O Geraldine! since arms of thine
 Have been the lovely lady's prison.
 O Geraldine! one hour was thine—
 Thou'st had thy will! By tairn² and rill,
 The night-birds all that hour were still.
 But now they are jubilant anew.
 From cliff and tower, tu—whoo! tu—whoo!
 Tu—whoo! tu—whoo! from wood and fell!

And see! the lady Christabel
 Gathers herself from out her trance;
 Her limbs relax, her countenance
 Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids

¹Think.

²*I.e.*, tarn, small mountain pool or lake.

Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds—
Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light!

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
Like a youthful hermitess,
Beauteous in a wilderness,
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.
And, if she move unquietly,
Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free
Comes back and tingles in her feet.
No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.
What if her guardian spirit 'twere,
What if she knew her mother near?
But this she knows, in joys and woes,
That saints will aid if men will call:
For the blue sky bends over all.

PART THE SECOND

Each matin bell, the Baron saith,
Knells us back to a world of death.
These words Sir Leoline first said,
When he rose and found his lady dead:
These words Sir Leoline will say
Many a morn to his dying day!

And hence the custom and law began
That still at dawn the sacristan,
Who duly pulls the heavy bell,
Five and forty beads must tell
Between each stroke—a warning knell,
Which not a soul can choose but hear
From Bratha Head¹ to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, "So let it knell!
And let the drowsy sacristan
Still count as slowly as he can!
There is no lack of such, I ween,
As well fill up the space between.
In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair,
And Dungeon-ghyll² so foully rent,
With ropes of rock and bells of air
Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,
Who all give back, one after t'other,
The death-note to their living brother;
And oft too, by the knell offended,
Just as their one! two! three! is ended,
The devil mocks the doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borrowdale."

The air is still! through mist and cloud
That merry peal comes ringing loud;
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,
And rises lightly from the bed,
Puts on her silken vestments white,
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,
And nothing doubting of her spell
Awakens the lady Christabel.
"Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel?
I trust that you have rested well."

And Christabel awoke and spied
The same who lay down by her side—
O rather say, the same whom she
Raised up beneath the old oak tree!
Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair!
For she belike hath drunken deep
Of all the blessedness of sleep!
And while she spake, her looks, her air,
Such gentle thankfulness declare,
That (so it seemed) her girded vests
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts.
"Sure I have sinned!" said Christabel,
"Now heaven be praised if all be well!"
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,
Did she the lofty lady greet
With such perplexity of mind
As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed
Her maiden limbs, and having prayed
That He, who on the cross did groan,
Might wash away her sins unknown,
She forthwith led fair Geraldine
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.

The lovely maid and the lady tall
Are pacing both into the hall,
And pacing on through page and groom,
Enter the Baron's presence-room.

The Baron rose, and while he pressed
His gentle daughter to his breast,
With cheerful wonder in his eyes
The lady Geraldine espies,
And gave such welcome to the same,
As might beseem so bright a dame!

But when he heard the lady's tale,
And when she told her father's name,
Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale,
Murmuring o'er the name again,
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?

¹The Brathay is a river which flows into Lake Windermere, in the Lake country.

²Ravine containing a stream.

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
 But whispering tongues can poison truth;
 And constancy lives in realms above;
 And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
 And to be wroth with one we love
 Doth work like madness in the brain.
 And thus it chanced, as I divine,
 With Roland and Sir Leoline.
 Each spake words of high disdain
 And insult to his heart's best brother:
 They parted—ne'er to meet again!
 But never either found another
 To free the hollow heart from paining—
 They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
 Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
 A dreary sea now flows between:
 But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
 Shall wholly do away, I ween,
 The marks of that which once hath been.

Sir Leoline, a moment's space,
 Stood gazing on the damsel's face:
 And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine
 Came back upon his heart again.

Q then the Baron forgot his age,
 His noble heart swelled high with rage;
 He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side
 He would proclaim it far and wide,
 With trump and solemn heraldry,
 That they, who thus had wronged the
 dame

Were base as spotted infamy!
 "And if they dare deny the same,
 My herald shall appoint a week,
 And let the recreant traitors seek
 My tourney court—that there and then
 I may dislodge their reptile souls
 From the bodies and forms of men!"
 He spake: his eye in lightning rolls!
 For the lady was ruthlessly seized; and he
 kenned

In the beautiful lady the child of his friend!

And now the tears were on his face,
 And fondly in his arms he took
 Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace,
 Prolonging it with joyous look.
 Which when she viewed, a vision fell
 Upon the soul of Christabel,
 The vision of fear, the touch and pain!
 She shrunk and shuddered, and saw again—
 (Ah, woe is me! Was it for thee,
 Thou gentle maid! such sights to see?)

Again she saw that bosom old,
 Again she felt that bosom cold,
 And drew in her breath with a hissing sound:
 Whereat the Knight turned wildly round,
 And nothing saw, but his own sweet maid
 With eyes upraised, as one that prayed.

The touch, the sight, had passed away,
 And in its stead that vision bless'd,
 Which comforted her after-rest,
 While in the lady's arms she lay,
 Had put a rapture in her breast,
 And on her lips and o'er her eyes
 Spread smiles like light!

With new surprise,
 "What ails then my belovéd child?"
 The Baron said.—His daughter mild
 Made answer, "All will yet be well!"
 I ween, she had no power to tell
 Aught else: so mighty was the spell.

Yet he who saw this Geraldine
 Had deemed her sure a thing divine.
 Such sorrow with such grace she blended,
 As if she feared she had offended
 Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!
 And with such lowly tones she prayed
 She might be sent without delay
 Home to her father's mansion.

"Nay!
 Nay, by my soul!" said Leoline.
 "Ho! Bracy the bard, the charge be thine!
 Go thou, with music sweet and loud,
 And take two steeds with trappings proud,
 And take the youth whom thou lov'st best
 To bear thy harp, and learn thy song,
 And clothe you both in solemn vest,
 And over the mountains haste along,
 Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,
 Detain you on the valley road.

"And when he has crossed the Irthing flood,
 My merry bard! he hastes, he hastes
 Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth Wood,
 And reaches soon that castle good
 Which stands and threatens Scotland's
 wastes.

"Bard Bracy! bard Bracy! your horses are
 fleet,
 Ye must ride up the hall, your music so
 sweet,
 More loud than your horses' echoing feet!

And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,
 Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!
 Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free—
 Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me.
 He bids thee come without delay
 With all thy numerous array;
 And take thy lovely daughter home:
 And he will meet thee on the way
 With all his numerous array
 White with their panting palfreys' foam:
 And, by mine honor! I will say,
 That I repent me of the day
 When I spake words of fierce disdain
 To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine!—
 —For since that evil hour hath flown,
 Many a summer's sun hath shone;
 Yet ne'er found I a friend again
 Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine."

The lady fell, and clasped his knees,
 Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflowing;
 And Bracy replied, with faltering voice,
 His gracious hail on all bestowing:
 "Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,
 Are sweeter than my harp can tell;
 Yet might I gain a boon of thee,
 This day my journey should not be;
 So strange a dream hath come to me,
 That I had vowed with music loud
 To clear yon wood from thing unblest'd,
 Warned by a vision in my rest!
 For in my sleep I saw that dove,
 That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,
 And call'st by thy own daughter's name—
 Sir Leoline! I saw the same,
 Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,
 Among the green herbs in the forest alone.
 Which when I saw and when I heard,
 I wondered what might ail the bird;
 For nothing near it could I see,
 Save the grass and green herbs underneath
 the old tree.

"And in my dream, methought, I went
 To search out what might there be found;
 And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,
 That thus lay fluttering on the ground.
 I went and peered, and could descry
 No cause for her distressful cry;
 But yet for her dear lady's sake
 I stooped, methought, the dove to take,
 When lo! I saw a bright green snake
 Coiled around its wings and neck,

Green as the herbs on which it couched,
 Close by the dove's its head it crouched;
 And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
 Swelling its neck as she swelled hers!
 I woke; it was the midnight hour,
 The clock was echoing in the tower;
 But though my slumber was gone by,
 This dream it would not pass away—
 It seems to live upon my eye!
 And thence I vowed this self-same day
 With music strong and saintly song
 To wander through the forest bare,
 Lest aught unholy loiter there."

Thus Bracy said: the Baron, the while,
 Half-listening heard him with a smile;
 Then turned to Lady Geraldine,
 His eyes made up of wonder and love;
 And said in courtly accents fine,
 "Sweet maid, Lord Roland's beauteous
 dove,
 With arms more strong than harp or
 song,
 Thy sire and I will crush the snake!"
 He kissed her forehead as he spake,
 And Geraldine in maiden wise
 Casting down her large bright eyes,
 With blushing cheek and courtesy fine
 She turned her from Sir Leoline;
 Softly gathering up her train,
 That o'er her right arm fell again;
 And folded her arms across her chest,
 And couched her head upon her breast,
 And looked askance at Christabel—
 Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,
 And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,
 Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,
 And with somewhat of malice, and more of
 dread,
 At Christabel she looked askance!—
 One moment—and the sight was fled!
 But Christabel in dizzy trance
 Stumbling on the unsteady ground
 Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound;
 And Geraldine again turned round,
 And like a thing that sought relief,
 Full of wonder and full of grief,
 She rolled her large bright eyes divine
 Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone,
 She nothing sees—no sight but one!

The maid, devoid of guile and sin,
 I know not how, in fearful wise,
 So deeply had she drunken in
 That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
 That all her features were resigned
 To this sole image in her mind:
 And passively did imitate
 That look of dull and treacherous hate!
 And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,
 Still picturing that look askance
 With forced unconscious sympathy
 Full before her father's view——
 As far as such a look could be
 In eyes so innocent and blue!

And, when the trance was o'er, the maid
 Paused awhile, and inly prayed:
 Then falling at the Baron's feet,
 "By my mother's soul do I entreat
 That thou this woman send away!"
 She said: and more she could not say:
 For what she knew she could not tell,
 O'er-mastered by the mighty spell.

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,
 Sir Leoline? Thy only child
 Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,
 So fair, so innocent, so mild;
 The same, for whom thy lady died!
 O, by the pangs of her dear mother
 Think thou no evil of thy child!
 For her, and thee, and for no other,
 She prayed the moment ere she died:
 Prayed that the babe for whom she died,
 Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride!
 That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,
 Sir Leoline!
 And wouldst thou wrong thy only child,
 Her child and thine?

Within the Baron's heart and brain
 If thoughts, like these, had any share,
 They only swelled his rage and pain,
 And did but work confusion there.
 His heart was cleft with pain and rage,
 His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild,
 Dishonored thus in his old age;
 Dishonored by his only child,
 And all his hospitality
 To the insulted daughter of his friend
 By more than woman's jealousy
 Brought thus to a disgraceful end——
 He rolled his eye with stern regard
 Upon the gentle minstrel bard,

And said in tones abrupt, austere——
 "Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?
 I bade thee hence!" The bard obeyed;
 And turning from his own sweet maid,
 The agéd knight, Sir Leoline,
 Led forth the lady Geraldine!

THE CONCLUSION TO PART THE SECOND

A little child, a limber elf,
 Singing, dancing to itself,
 A fairy thing with red round cheeks,
 That always finds, and never seeks,
 Makes such a vision to the sight
 As fills a father's eyes with light;
 And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
 Upon his heart, that he at last
 Must needs express his love's excess
 With words of unmeant bitterness.
 Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together
 Thoughts so all unlike each other;
 To mutter and mock a broken charm,
 To dally with wrong that does no harm.
 Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty
 At each wild word to feel within
 A sweet recoil of love and pity.
 And what, if in a world of sin
 (O sorrow and shame should this be true!)
 Such giddiness of heart and brain
 Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
 So talks as it's most used to do.¹

¹Coleridge never finished *Christabel*, though he more than once insisted that he had "the whole plan entire from beginning to end" in his mind. James Gillman states that Coleridge outlined to his friends the conclusion of the story as follows: "The following relation was to have occupied a third and fourth canto, and to have closed the tale. Over the mountains, the Bard, as directed by Sir Leoline, hastes with his disciple; but in consequence of one of those inundations supposed to be common to this country, the spot only where the castle once stood is discovered—the edifice itself being washed away. He determines to return. Geraldine, being acquainted with all that is passing, like the weird sisters in *Macbeth*, vanishes. Reappearing, however, she awaits the return of the Bard, exciting in the meantime, by her wily arts, all the anger she could rouse in the Baron's breast, as well as that jealousy of which he is described to have been susceptible. The old Bard and the youth at length arrive, and therefore she can no longer personate the character of Geraldine, the daughter of Lord Roland de Vaux, but changes her appearance to that of the accepted though absent lover of Christabel. Now ensues a courtship most distressing to Christobel, who feels, she knows not why, great disgust for her once favored knight. This coldness is very painful to the Baron, who has no more conception than herself of the supernatural transformation. She at last yields to her father's entreaties, and consents to approach the altar with this hated suitor. The real

HYMN BEFORE SUN-RISE, IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI¹

HAST thou a charm to stay the morning-star
In his steep course? So long he seems to
pause

On thy bald awful head, O sovran BLANC!
The Arve and Arveiron² at thy base
Rave ceaselessly; but thou, most awful
Form!

Risest from forth thy silent sea of pines,
How silently! Around thee and above
Deep is the air and dark, substantial, black,
An ebon mass: methinks thou piercest it,
As with a wedge! But when I look again,
It is thine own calm home, thy crystal shrine,
Thy habitation from eternity!

O dread and silent Mount! I gazed upon
thee,

Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
Didst vanish from my thought: entranced in
prayer

I worshipped the Invisible alone.

Yet, like some sweet beguiling melody,
So sweet, we know not we are listening to it,
Thou, the meanwhile, wast blending with my
Thought,

Yea, with my Life and Life's own secret joy:
Till the dilating Soul, enrapt, transfused,
Into the mighty vision passing—there
As in her natural form, swelled vast to
Heaven!

lover, returning, enters at this moment, and produces the ring which she had once given him in sign of her betrothment. Thus defeated, the supernatural being Geraldine disappears. As predicted, the castle bell tolls, the mother's voice is heard, and, to the exceeding great joy of the parties, the rightful marriage takes place, after which follows a reconciliation and explanation between the father and daughter."

¹First printed in 1802. Chamouni is a valley, about 14 miles in length, north of Mont Blanc. A few months after Coleridge's death De Quincey made it known (in an article in *Tail's Magazine*) that Coleridge had never been to Chamouni, and that the *Hymn* "is an expansion of a short poem in stanzas upon the same subject by Frederica Brun, a female poet of Germany. . . . The mere framework of the poem is exactly the same. . . . On the other hand, by a judicious amplification of some topics, and by its far deeper tone of lyrical enthusiasm, the dry bones of the German outline have been created by Coleridge into the fullness of life. It is not, therefore, a paraphrase, but a recast of the original."

²Rivers rising at the foot of Mont Blanc.

Awake, my soul! not only passive praise
Thou owest! not alone these swelling tears,
Mute thanks and secret ecstasy! Awake,
Voice of sweet song! Awake, my heart
awake!

Green vales and icy cliffs, all join my hymn

Thou first and chief, sole sovereign of the
Vale!

O struggling with the darkness all the night
And visited all night by troops of stars,
Or when they climb the sky or when the
sink:

Companion of the morning-star at dawn,
Thyself Earth's rosy star, and of the dawn
Co-herald: wake, O wake, and utter praise
Who sank thy sunless pillars deep in Earth
Who filled thy countenance with rosy light
Who made thee parent of perpetual streams

And you, ye five wild torrents fiercely glad
Who called you forth from night and utter
death,

From dark and icy caverns called you forth
Down those precipitous, black, jagged rock
For ever shattered and the same for ever?
Who gave you your invulnerable life,
Your strength, your speed, your fury, and
your joy,

Unceasing thunder and eternal foam?
And who commanded (and the silence came)
Here let the billows stiffen, and have rest?

Ye Ice-falls! ye that from the mountain
brow

Adown enormous ravines slope amain—
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty
voice,

And stopped at once amid their madder
plunge!

Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!
Who made you glorious as the Gates of
Heaven

Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade thee
sun

Clothe you with rainbows? Who, with living
ing flowers

Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your
feet?—

God! let the torrents, like a shout of nation
Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!
God! sing ye meadow-streams with gladsonant
voice!

Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!

And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
And in their perilous fall shall thunder,
GOD!

* Ye living flowers that skirt the eternal frost!

Ye wild goats sporting round the eagle's nest!
Ye eagles, play-mates of the mountain-storm!

Ye lightnings, the dread arrows of the clouds!
Ye signs and wonders of the element!
Utter forth God, and fill the hills with praise!

Thou too, hoar Mount! with thy sky-pointing peaks,
Oft from whose feet the avalanche, unheard,
Shoots downward, glittering through the pure serene
Into the depth of clouds, that veil thy breast—

Thou too again, stupendous Mountain! thou
That as I raise my head, awhile bowed low
In adoration, upward from thy base

• Slow traveling with dim eyes suffused with tears,

Solemnly seemest, like a vapory cloud,
To rise before me—Rise, O ever rise,
Rise like a cloud of incense from the Earth!
Thou kingly Spirit throned among the hills,
Thou dread ambassador from Earth to Heaven,

Great hierarch! tell thou the silent sky,
And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun
Earth, with her thousand voices, praises GOD.

DEJECTION: AN ODE

WRITTEN APRIL 4, 1802

Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon,
With the old Moon in her arms;
And I fear, I fear, my Master dear!
We shall have a deadly storm.

Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence.

I

WELL! If the Bard was weather-wise, who made

The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spence,
This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence

Unroused by winds, that ply a busier trade

Than those which mold yon cloud in lazy flakes,

Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes

Upon the strings of this Æolian lute,
Which better far were mute.

For lo! the New-moon winter-bright!
And overspread with phantom light,
(With swimming phantom light o'erspread
But rimmed and circled by a silver thread)

I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling
The coming-on of rain and squally blast.
And oh! that even now the gust were swelling,
And the slant night-shower driving loud
and fast!

Those sounds which oft have raised me,
whilst they awed,
And sent my soul abroad,

Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,

Might startle this dull pain, and make it move and live!

II

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear—

O Lady! in this wan and heartless mood,
To other thoughts by yonder throistle wooed,
All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
Have I been gazing on the western sky,

And its peculiar tint of yellow green:
And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye!
And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,

That give away their motion to the stars;
Those stars, that glide behind them or between,

Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen:

Yon crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew
In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;
I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!

III

My genial spirits fail;
And what can these avail

To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?

It were a vain endeavor,
Though I should gaze for ever

On that green light that lingers in the west:

I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are
within.

IV

O Lady! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live:
Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her
shroud!

And would we aught behold, of higher
worth,

Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud

Enveloping the Earth—

And from the soul itself must there be sent

A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element!

V

O pure of heart! thou need'st not ask of me
What this strong music in the soul may be!
What, and wherein it doth exist,
This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
This beautiful and beauty-making power.

Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne'er was
given,

Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and
shower,

Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,
Which, wedding Nature to us, gives in dower

A new Earth and new Heaven,
Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud—
Joy is the sweet, Joy the luminous cloud—

We in ourselves rejoice!

And thence flows all that charms our ear or
sight,

All melodies the echoes of that voice,
All colors a suffusion from that light.

VI

There was a time when, though my path was
rough,

This joy within me dallied with distress,
And all misfortunes were but as the stuff

Whence Fancy made me dreams of happi-
ness:

For Hope grew round me, like the twining
vine,

And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed
mine.

But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth;

But oh! each visitation

Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
My shaping spirit of Imagination.

For not to think of what I needs must feel,
But to be still and patient, all I can;

And haply by abstruse research to steal

From my own nature all the natural man—

This was my sole resource, my only plan:
Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
And now is almost grown the habit of my
soul.

VII

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my
mind,

Reality's dark dream!

I turn from you, and listen to the wind,
Which long has raved unnoticed.

What a scream

Of agony by torture lengthened out
That lute sent forth! Thou Wind, that
rav'st without,

Bare crag, or mountain-tairn, or blasted
tree,

Or pine-grove whither woodman never
clomb,

Or lonely house, long held the witches' home,
Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,

Mad Lutanist! who in this month of show-
ers,

Of dark-brown gardens, and of peeping flow-
ers,

Mak'st Devil's yule, with worse than wintry
song,

The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves
among.

Thou actor, perfect in all tragic sounds!

Thou mighty Poet, even to frenzy bold!

What tell'st thou now about?

'Tis of the rushing of an host in rout,

With groans of trampled men, with smart-
ing wounds—

At once they groan with pain, and shudder
with the cold!

But hush! there is a pause of deepest silence!

And all that noise, as of a rushing crowd,
With groans, and tremulous shudderings—
all is over—

It tells another tale, with sounds less deep
and loud!

A tale of less affright,

And tempered with delight,

As Otway's¹ self had framed the tender lay,
 'Tis of a little child
 Upon a lonesome wild,
 Not far from home, but she hath lost her
 way:
 And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,
 And now screams loud, and hopes to make
 her mother hear.

VIII

'Tis midnight, but small thoughts have I of
 sleep:
 Full seldom may my friend such vigils keep!
 Visit her, gentle Sleep! with wings of healing,
 And may this storm be but a mountain-
 birth,
 May all the stars hang bright above her
 dwelling,
 Silent as though they watched the sleeping
 Earth!
 With light heart may she rise,
 Gay fancy, cheerful eyes,
 Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice;
 To her may all things live, from pole to
 pole,
 • Their life the eddying of her living soul!
 O simple spirit, guided from above,
 Dear Lady! friend devoutest of my choice,
 Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice.

YOUTH AND AGE²

VERSE, a breeze mid blossoms straying,
 Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee—
 Both were mine! Life went a-maying
 With Nature, Hope, and Poesy,
 When I was young!
 When I was young?—Ah, woeful When!
 Ah! for the change 'twixt Now and Then!
 This breathing house not built with hands,
 This body that does me grievous wrong,
 O'er aery cliffs and glittering sands,
 How lightly *then* it flashed along:—
 Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
 On winding lakes and rivers wide,
 That ask no aid of sail or oar,
 That fear no spite of wind or tide!
 Nought cared this body for wind or weather
 When Youth and I lived in't together.

Flowers are lovely; Love is flower-like;
 Friendship is a sheltering tree;
 O! the joys, that came down shower-like,
 Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty,
 Ere I was old!
 Ere I was old? Ah woeful Ere,
 Which tells me, Youth's no longer here!
 O Youth! for years so many and sweet,
 'Tis known, that Thou and I were one,
 I'll think it but a fond conceit—
 It cannot be that Thou art gone!
 Thy vesper-bell hath not yet tolled:—
 And thou wert aye a masker bold!
 What strange disguise hast now put on,
 To make believe, that thou art gone?
 I see these locks in silvery slips,
 This drooping gait, this altered size:
 But Spring-tide blossoms on thy lips,
 And tears take sunshine from thine eyes!
 Life is but thought: so think I will
 That Youth and I are house-mates still.

Dew-drops are the gems of morning,
 But the tears of mournful eve!
 Where no hope is, life's a warning
 That only serves to make us grieve,
 When we are old:
 That only serves to make us grieve
 With oft and tedious taking-leave,
 Like some poor nigh-related guest,
 That may not rudely be dismissed;
 Yet hath outstayed his welcome while,
 And tells the jest without the smile.

WORK WITHOUT HOPE³

LINES COMPOSED 21ST FEBRUARY, 1827

ALL Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their
 lair—
 The bees are stirring—birds are on the
 wing—
 And Winter slumbering in the open air,
 Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!
 And I the while, the sole unbusy thing,
 Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor
 sing.

Yet well I ken the banks where amaranths
 blow,
 Have traced the fount whence streams of
 nectar flow.

³First printed in 1828.

¹Thomas Otway (1652–1685), the dramatist.

²Begun in 1823; first printed (without the last eleven lines) in 1828. The last eleven lines were written, and published as a separate poem, in 1832.

Bloom, O ye amaranths! bloom for whom ye may, For me ye bloom not! Glide, rich streams, away! With lips unbrightened, wreathless brow, I stroll:	And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul? Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve, And Hope without an object cannot live.
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CHARLES LAMB (1775-1834)

Lamb's father was a clerk and confidential servant of a barrister, and lived with his family in rooms in the Inner Temple, London, where Charles Lamb was born on 10 February, 1775, the youngest of seven children. Of these only two besides Charles survived childhood—John and Mary, who were respectively twelve and ten years older than Charles. In the Temple Lamb passed the first seven years of his life, and then, through the fortunate interest of one of the governors of Christ's Hospital, was admitted to that school, where he remained until he was fourteen. This was the sum of his formal education, which included a very fair knowledge of Latin and some knowledge of Greek. At Christ's Hospital, too, Lamb formed several lasting friendships, perhaps the closest and certainly the most significant being that with Coleridge. Lamb was never blind to Coleridge's faults, small and large—he described him as an "archangel, a little damaged"—but, like most of Coleridge's other friends, he was deeply impressed by him, and when Coleridge died he wrote: "I feel how great a part he was of me. His great and dear spirit haunts me. I cannot think a thought, I cannot make a criticism on men or books, without an ineffectual turning and reference to him. He was the proof and touchstone of all my cogitations." After leaving Christ's Hospital Lamb obtained a minor post in the South Sea House, where his brother John was employed. A couple of years later, in 1792, he became a clerk in the employ of the East India Company—a position in which he faithfully served until 1825, when the directors of the company retired him on a pension. Thus Lamb's life was passed in London. In his childhood and youth he made occasional visits into the country in Hertfordshire, where his grandmother was housekeeper at Blakesware, a country home of the Plumer family; and there, possibly in the near-by village of Widford, he saw and fell in love with the "fair Alice" of *Dream Children*, whom he could not marry. Later in life, too, he spent some of his brief vacations in the country, but to London he always returned with joy—"London," as he wrote to a Cambridge friend, "whose dirtiest drab-frequented alley, and her lowest-bowing tradesman, I would not exchange for Skiddaw, Helvellyn, James, Walter, and the parson into the bargain. O! her lamps of a night! her rich goldsmiths, print-shops, toy-shops, mercers, hardware men, pastry-cooks, St. Paul's Church-Yard, the Strand, Exeter Change, Charing Cross, with the man *upon* a black horse! These are thy gods, O London! Ain't you mightily moped on the banks of the Cam? Had you not better come and set up here? You can't think what a difference. All the streets and pavements are pure gold, I warrant you. At least, I know an alchemy that turns her mud into that metal—a mind that loves to be at home in crowds."

Yet life in his beloved London was in one respect a never-ending tragedy to Lamb. There was a strain of insanity in his family which attacked him in the winter of 1795-1796. After it was over he could be merry enough about it, as he could so fortunately be merry over almost everything else. "My life," he wrote Coleridge, "has been somewhat diversified of late. The six weeks that finished last year and began this, your very humble servant spent very agreeably in a mad-house at Hoxton. I am got somewhat rational now, and don't bite any one. But mad I was!" Insanity never attacked Lamb again, but in September, 1796, his sister suddenly became mad and, in Lamb's presence, stabbed their mother to death and wounded their father. Later she recovered her sanity, but always after that she was subject to recurrent fits of madness, and Lamb sacrificed his life to her welfare, becoming responsible for her and caring for her tenderly until his own death on 27 December, 1834.

In the earlier years of their life together the two were very poor, and it was in the hope of increasing their income that Lamb published *A Tale of Rosamund Gray* in 1798. This, however, brought in very little money, and Lamb next attempted to write plays; but he could not get his tragedy, *John Woodvil*, accepted by any theatrical manager, while his comedy, *Mr. H.*, was hissed down as a failure on the first, and only, night of its performance at Drury Lane, Lamb himself joining in the hisses. Several years later William Godwin commissioned the Lambs to write a book for children, and this was immediately successful upon its publication in 1807. It was the *Tales from Shakespeare*, in which Mary Lamb did the comedies and Charles the tragedies. In the following year Lamb published his *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets Contemporary with Shakespeare*, which was a not unimportant manifesto of the English romantic movement, and in which Lamb finely exhibited his powers as a critic. But his most fully characteristic work was yet to come. This was the series of *Essays of Elia* contributed to the *London Magazine* in 1820-1822 and published as a book in 1823. A second group of his essays was published as the *Last Essays of Elia* in 1833. In these essays Lamb wrote at his ease in a style more intimately personal than

had been usual with essayists before his day, and on topics which he freely chose for himself. No analysis is likely to succeed in disentangling their charm; for one reader it may lie chiefly in their quaint bookish flavor derived from Lamb's wide reading in seventeenth-century literature, for another it may lie in their vein of sensibility at once delicate and tender, and for still another it may lie in Lamb's odd, irrepressible humor. Yet the majority of Lamb's readers are probably content not to ask such questions; for of him it is truer than of most writers that there are no half-way measures with him—if one likes him at all one loves him.

THE TWO RACES OF MEN¹

THE human species, according to the best theory I can form of it, is composed of two distinct races, *the men who borrow*, and *the men who lend*. To these two original diversities may be reduced all those impertinent classifications of Gothic and Celtic tribes, white men, black men, red men. All the dwellers upon earth, "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites,"² flock hither, and do naturally fall in with one or other of these primary distinctions. The infinite superiority of the former, which I choose to designate as the *great race*, is discernible in their figure, port, and a certain instinctive sovereignty. The latter are born degraded. "He shall serve his brethren."³ There is something in the air of one of this cast, lean and suspicious; contrasting with the open, trusting, generous manners of the other.

Observe who have been the greatest borrowers of all ages—Alcibiades⁴—Falstaff

¹The first five of the essays here printed come from *Elia* (1823), the sixth and the *Popular Fallacies* from *The Last Essays of Elia* (1833). All of them were published in periodicals before being collected into books, the first six in the *London Magazine* and the *Popular Fallacies* in the *New Monthly Magazine*. Elia was the name of an Italian who had been a clerk in the South Sea House when Lamb was there (before 1792). Lamb explained why he began using this pseudonym in a letter to the publisher of the *London Magazine* concerning *The South Sea House* (the earliest of the Elia essays): "Having a brother now there, and doubting how he might relish certain descriptions in it, I clapped down the name of Elia to it, which passed off pretty well, for Elia himself added the function of an author to that of a scrivener, like myself. I went the other day (not having seen him [Elia] for a year) to laugh over with him at my usurpation of his name, and found him, alas! no more than a name, for he died of consumption eleven months ago, and I knew not of it. So the name has fairly devolved on me, I think; and 'tis all he has left me."

²Acts, ii, 9.

³Genesis, ix, 25.

⁴Athenian general, 450–404 B. C.

—Sir Richard Steele—our late incomparable Brinsley⁵—what a family likeness in all four!

What a careless, even deportment hath your borrower! what rosy gills! what a beautiful reliance on Providence doth he manifest—taking no more thought than lilies!⁶ What contempt for money—accounting it (yours and mine especially) no better than dross! What a liberal confounding of those pedantic distinctions of *meum* and *tuum*!⁷ or rather, what a noble simplification of language (beyond Tooke⁸), resolving these supposed opposites into one clear, intelligible pronoun adjective!—What near approaches doth he make to the primitive *communism*⁹—to the extent of one-half of the principle at least!—

He is the true taxpayer who "calletth all the world up to be taxed";¹⁰ and the distance is as vast between him and *one of us*, as subsisted betwixt the Augustan Majesty and the poorest obolar Jew¹¹ that paid it tribute-pittance at Jerusalem!—His exactions, too, have such a cheerful, voluntary air! So far removed from your sour parochial or state-gatherers—those ink-horn varlets, who carry their want of welcome in their faces! He cometh to you with a smile, and troubleth you with no receipt; confining himself to no set season. Every day is his Candlemas,¹² or his Feast of Holy Michael. He applieth the *lene tormentum*¹³ of a pleasant look to your

⁵Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751–1816), playwright and wit.

⁶St. Matthew, vi, 28.

⁷Mine and thine.

⁸John Horne Tooke (1736–1812), politician and philologist, who published his philological theories in *The Diversions of Purley*.

⁹*I.e.*, communism.

¹⁰St. Luke, ii, 1.

¹¹*I.e.*, between the Emperor Augustus and the Jew who paid an obolus (about 3 cents).

¹²2nd February, a quarter-day, for the payment of rents, in Scotland. Michaelmas, 29 September, is an English quarter-day.

¹³Gentle stimulus.

purse—which to that gentle warmth expands her silken leaves, as naturally as the cloak of the traveler, for which sun and wind contended! He is the true Propontic! which never ebbeth! The sea which taketh handsomely at each man's hand. In vain the victim, whom he delighteth to honor, struggles with destiny; he is in the net. Lend therefore cheerfully, O man ordained to lend—that thou lose not in the end, with thy worldly penny, the reversion promised. Combine not preposterously in thine own person the penalties of Lazarus and of Dives!²—but, when thou seest the proper authority coming, meet it smilingly, as it were half-way. Come, a handsome sacrifice! See how light *he* makes of it! Strain not courtesies with a noble enemy.

Reflections like the foregoing were forced upon my mind by the death of my old friend, Ralph Bigod,³ Esq., who departed this life on Wednesday evening; dying, as he had lived, without much trouble. He boasted himself a descendant from mighty ancestors of that name, who heretofore held ducal dignities in this realm. In his actions and sentiments he belied not the stock to which he pretended. Early in life he found himself invested with ample revenues; which, with that noble disinterestedness which I have noticed as inherent in men of the *great race*, he took almost immediate measures entirely to dissipate and bring to nothing: for there is something revolting in the idea of a king holding a private purse; and the thoughts of Bigod were all regal. Thus furnished, by the very act of disfurnishment; getting rid of the cumbersome luggage of riches, more apt (as one sings)

To slacken virtue, and abate her edge,
Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise,⁴

he set forth, like some Alexander, upon his great enterprise, "borrowing and to borrow!"

In his periegesis,⁵ or triumphant progress throughout this island, it has been calculated that he laid a tithe⁶ part of the inhabitants

under contribution. I reject this estimate as greatly exaggerated:—but having had the honor of accompanying my friend divers times, in his perambulations about this vast city, I own I was greatly struck at first with the prodigious number of faces we met, who claimed a sort of respectful acquaintance with us. He was one day so obliging as to explain the phenomenon. It seems, these were his tributaries; feeders of his exchequer; gentlemen, his good friends (as he was pleased to express himself), to whom he had occasionally been beholden for a loan. Their multitudes did in no way disconcert him. He rather took a pride in numbering them; and, with Comus, seemed pleased to be "stocked with so fair a herd."

With such sources, it was a wonder how he contrived to keep his treasury always empty. He did it by force of an aphorism, which he had often in his mouth, that "money kept longer than three days stinks." So he made use of it while it was fresh. A good part he drank away (for he was an excellent toss-pot), some he gave away, the rest he threw away, literally tossing and hurling it violently from him—as boys do burrs, or as if it had been infectious,—into ponds, or ditches, or deep holes,—inscrutable cavities of the earth;—or he would bury it (where he would never seek it again) by a river's side under some bank, which (he would facetiously observe) paid no interest—but out away from him it must go peremptorily, as Hagar's offspring⁷ into the wilderness, while it was sweet. He never missed it. The streams were perennial which fed his fisc.⁸ When new supplies became necessary, the first person that had the felicity to fall in with him, friend or stranger, was sure to contribute to the deficiency. For Bigod had an *undeniable* way with him. He had a cheerful, open exterior, a quick jovial eye, a bald forehead, just touched with gray (*canfides*⁹). He anticipated no excuse, and found none. And, waiving for a while my theory as to the *great race*, I would put it to the most untheorizing reader, who may at times have disposable coin in his pocket, whether it is not more repugnant to the kindness of his nature to

¹The Sea of Marmora, which has no tides.

²St. Luke, xvi, 19-31.

³*I.e.*, John Fenwick, a friend of the Lambs who was usually in financial difficulties.

⁴*Paradise Regained*, Bk. II, ll. 455-6.

⁵Journey round.

⁶Tenth.

⁷Ishmael, Genesis, xxi, 9.

⁸Purse.

⁹The gray hair of honor. *Cf.* *Æneid*, Bk. I, l. 292.

refuse such a one as I am describing, than to say *no* to a poor petitionary rogue (your bastard borrower), who, by his mumping visnomy,¹ tells you that he expects nothing better; and, therefore, whose preconceived notions and expectations you do in reality so much less shock in the refusal.

When I think of this man; his fiery glow of heart; his swell of feeling; how magnificent, how *ideal* he was; how great at the midnight hour; and when I compare with him the companions with whom I have associated since, I grudge the saving of a few idle ducats,² and think that I am fallen into the society of *lenders*, and *little men*.

To one like Elia, whose treasures are rather cased in leather covers than closed in iron coffers, there is a class of alienators³ more formidable than that which I have touched upon; I mean your *borrowers of books*—those mutilators of collections, spoilers of the symmetry of shelves, and creators of odd volumes. There is Comberbatch,⁴ matchless in his depredations!

That foul gap in the bottom shelf facing you, like a great eye-tooth knocked out—(you are now with me in my little back study in Bloomsbury,⁵ reader!)—with the huge Switzer-like⁶ tomes on each side (like the Guildhall giants, in their reformed posture, guardant of nothing) once held the tallest of my folios, *Opera Bonaventura*,⁷ choice and massy divinity, to which its two supporters (school⁸ divinity also, but of a lesser caliber—Bellarmine,⁹ and Holy Thomas¹⁰), showed but as dwarfs,—itself an Ascapart!¹¹—*that* Comberbatch abstracted upon the faith of a theory he holds, which is more easy, I confess, for me to suffer by than to refute, namely, that “the title to property in a book

(my Bonaventure, for instance), is in exact ratio to the claimant’s powers of understanding and appreciating the same.” Should he go on acting upon this theory, which of our shelves is safe?

The slight vacuum in the left-hand case—two shelves from the ceiling—scarcely distinguishable but by the quick eye of a loser—was whilom the commodious resting-place of Brown on Urn Burial.¹² C. will hardly allege that he knows more about that treatise than I do, who introduced it to him, and was indeed the first (of the moderns) to discover its beauties—but so have I known a foolish lover to praise his mistress in the presence of a rival more qualified to carry her off than himself.—Just below, Dodsley’s dramas¹³ want their fourth volume, where Vittoria Corombona is! The remainder nine are as distasteful as Priam’s refuse sons, when the Fates *borrowed* Hector. Here stood the Anatomy of Melancholy,¹⁴ in sober state.—There loitered the Complete Angler;¹⁵ quiet as in life, by some stream side.—In yonder nook, John Bunce,¹⁶ a widower-volume, with “eyes closed,” mourns his ravished mate.

One justice I must do my friend, that if he sometimes, like the sea, sweeps away a treasure, at another time, sea-like, he throws up as rich an equivalent to match it. I have a small under-collection of this nature (my friend’s gatherings in his various calls), picked up, he has forgotten at what odd places, and deposited with as little memory at mine. I take in these orphans, the twice-deserted. These proselytes of the gate are welcome as the true Hebrews. There they stand in conjunction; natives, and naturalized. The latter seem as little disposed to inquire out their true lineage as I am.—I charge no warehouse-room for these deodands,¹⁷ nor shall ever put myself to the

¹Begging physiognomy.

²Coins; originally, Italian coins.

³Takers of one’s property.

⁴Coleridge, who when he enlisted in a regiment of dragoons assumed the name of Silas Titus Comberback.

⁵A section of London in which Lamb was *not* living when he wrote this.

⁶*I.e.*, very large.

⁷The Works of St. Bonaventura.

⁸Scholastic.

⁹Italian Cardinal, lived 1542–1621.

¹⁰St. Thomas Aquinas, 1227–1274.

¹¹A giant thirty feet in height. He appears in *Bevis of Hampton*.

¹²Sir Thomas Browne’s *Hydriotaphia, or Urn-Burial*.

¹³Robert Dodsley (1703–1764) edited a collection of plays, among which was John Webster’s *The White Devil*, or *Vittoria Corombona* (1612).

¹⁴By Robert Burton (1577–1640).

¹⁵By Izaak Walton (1593–1683).

¹⁶By Thomas Amory (1691?–1788).

¹⁷In English law a thing which, having caused the death of a person, was forfeited to the Crown for pious uses.

ungentlemanly trouble of advertising a sale of them to pay expenses.

To lose a volume to C. carries some sense and meaning in it. You are sure that he will make one hearty meal on your viands, if he can give no account of the platter after it. But what moved thee, wayward, spiteful K.,¹ to be so importunate to carry off with thee, in spite of tears and adjurations to thee to forbear, the Letters of that princely woman, the thrice noble Margaret Newcastle?²—knowing at the time, and knowing that I knew also, thou most assuredly wouldst never turn over one leaf of the illustrious folio:—what but the mere spirit of contradiction, and childish love of getting the better of thy friend?—Then, worst cut of all! to transport it with thee to the Gallican land—

Unworthy land to harbor such a sweetness, A virtue in which all ennobling thoughts dwelt, Pure thoughts, kind thoughts, high thoughts, her sex's wonder!

—hadst thou not thy play-books, and books of jests and fancies, about thee, to keep thee merry, even as thou keepest all companies with thy quips and mirthful tales?—Child of the Green-room, it was unkindly done of thee. Thy wife, too, that part-French, better-part-Englishwoman!—that *she* could fix upon no other treatise to bear away in kindly token of remembering us, than the works of Fulke Greville, Lord Brook³—of which no Frenchman, nor woman of France, Italy, or England, was ever by nature constituted to comprehend a tittle! *Was there not Zimmerman⁴ on Solitude?*

Reader, if haply thou art blessed with a moderate collection, be shy of showing it; or if thy heart overfloweth to lend them, lend thy books; but let it be to such a one as S. T. C.—he will return them (generally anticipating the time appointed) with usury; enriched with annotations, tripling their value. I have had experience. Many are these precious MSS. of his—(in *matter* oftentimes, and almost in *quantity* not infrequently, vying with the originals)—in no

very clerkly hand—legible in my Daniel;⁵ in old Burton; in Sir Thomas Browne; and those abstruser cogitations of the Greville, now, alas! wandering in Pagan lands.—I counsel thee, shut not thy heart, nor thy library, against S. T. C.

A CHAPTER ON EARS

I HAVE no ear.—

Mistake me not, reader,—nor imagine that I am by nature destitute of those exterior twin appendages, hanging ornaments, and (architecturally speaking) handsome volutes⁶ to the human capital. Better my mother had never borne me.—I am, I think, rather delicately than copiously provided with those conduits; and I feel no disposition to envy the mule for his plenty, or the mole for her exactness, in those ingenious labyrinthine inlets—those indispensable side-intelligencers.

Neither have I incurred, nor done anything to incur, with Defoe, that hideous disfigurement, which constrained him to draw upon assurance—to feel “quite unabashed,” and at ease upon that article. I was never, I thank my stars, in the pillory, nor, if I read them aright, is it within the compass of my destiny, that I ever should be.

When therefore I say that I have no ear, you will understand me to mean—for *music*.—To say that this heart never melted at the concurrence of sweet sounds,⁸ would be a foul self-libel.—“*Water parted from the sea*” never fails to move it strangely. So does “*In infancy*.”⁹ But they were used to be sung at her harpsichord (the old-fashioned instrument in vogue in those days) by a gentlewoman—the gentlest, sure, that ever merited the appellation—the sweetest—why should I hesitate to name Mrs. S.—¹⁰ once

⁵Samuel Daniel (1562–1619).

⁶Spiral decorations on the tops of columns of the Ionic and Corinthian orders.

⁷On the first publication of this paper Lamb quoted in a note, from Pope's *Dunciad* (II, 147), “Earless on high stood unabashed Defoe.” Defoe was pilloried for his tract, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, but he never had his ears cropped.

⁸*Merchant of Venice*, V, i, 84.

⁹Both are songs from Arne's opera *Artaxerxes* (see Lamb's *My First Play*).

¹⁰Mrs. Spinkes. Nothing is known of her save her name.

¹James Kenney (1780–1849), a dramatist, at this time living in France.

²The first Duchess of Newcastle (1624–1673).

³Lived 1554–1628, the friend and biographer of Sir Philip Sidney.

⁴Johann Georg von Zimmermann (1728–1795), a Swiss physician.

the blooming Fanny Weatheral of the Temple—who had power to thrill the soul of Elia, small imp as he was even in his long coats; and to make him glow, tremble, and blush with a passion, that not faintly indicated the day-spring of that absorbing sentiment, which was afterwards destined to overwhelm and subdue his nature quite, for Alice W——n.¹

I even think that *sentimentally* I am disposed to harmony. But *organically* I am incapable of a tune. I have been practising “*God save the King*” all my life; whistling and humming of it over to myself in solitary corners; and am not yet arrived, they tell me, within many quavers of it. Yet hath the loyalty of Elia never been impeached.

I am not without suspicion that I have an undeveloped faculty of music within me. For, thrumming, in my wild way, on my friend A.’s² piano, the other morning, while he was engaged in an adjoining parlor,—on his return he was pleased to say, “*he thought it could not be the maid!*” On his first surprise at hearing the keys touched in somewhat an airy and masterful way, not dreaming of me, his suspicions had lighted on *Jenny*. But a grace, snatched from a superior refinement, soon convinced him that some being,—technically perhaps deficient, but higher informed from a principle common to all the fine arts,—had swayed the keys to a mood which *Jenny*, with all her (less cultivated) enthusiasm, could never have elicited from them. I mention this as a proof of my friend’s penetration, and not with any view of disparaging *Jenny*.

Scientifically I could never be made to understand (yet have I taken some pains) what a note in music is; or how one note should differ from another. Much less in voices can I distinguish a soprano from a tenor. Only sometimes the thorough bass³

¹According to a key Lamb made for a fellow clerk at the East India House this name is Alice Winterton, but Lamb adds that the name is feigned. It has been suggested that Lamb means Ann Simmons, of Blenheim, near Blakesware, but Mr. E. V. Lucas thinks “that Alice W——n was more an abstraction around which now and then to group tender imaginings of what might have been than any tangible figure.”

²Probably William Ayrton (1777–1818), musical critic and a friend of Lamb’s.

³*I.e.*, a bass voice. Lamb does not use the phrase in its technical sense.

I contrive to guess at, from its being supereminently harsh and disagreeable. I tremble, however, for my misapplication of the simplest terms of *that* which I disclaim. While I profess my ignorance, I scarce know what to *say* I am ignorant of. I hate, perhaps, by misnomers. *Sostenuto* and *adagio*⁴ stand in the like relation of obscurity to me; and *Sol, Fa, Mi, Re*,⁵ is as conjuring as *Baraliopton*.⁶

It is hard to stand alone—in an age like this,—(constituted to the quick and critical perception of all harmonious combinations, I verily believe, beyond all preceding ages, since Jubal tumbled upon the gamut)⁷—to remain, as it were, singly unimpressible to the magic influences of an art which is said to have such an especial stroke at soothing, elevating, and refining the passions.—Yet rather than break the candid current of my confessions, I must avow to you that I have received a great deal more pain than pleasure from this so cried-up faculty.

I am constitutionally susceptible of noises. A carpenter’s hammer, in a warm summer noon, will fret me into more than midsummer madness. But those unconnected, unset sounds are nothing to the measured malice of music. The ear is passive to those single strokes; willingly enduring stripes, while it hath no task to con.⁸ To music it cannot be passive. It will strive—mine at least will—’spite of its inaptitude, to thrid⁹ the maze; like an unskilled eye painfully poring upon hieroglyphics. I have sat through an Italian Opera, till, for sheer pain, and inexplicable anguish, I have rushed out into the noisiest places of the crowded streets, to solace myself with sounds which I was not obliged to follow, and get rid of the distracting torment of endless, fruitless, barren attention! I take refuge in the unpretending assemblage of honest, common-life sounds;—and the purgatory of the Enraged Musician¹⁰ becomes my paradise.

⁴“Sustained” and “slow.”

⁵Names of notes.

⁶*I.e.*, as mysterious as an arbitrary term in logic.

⁷Musical scale. See Genesis, iv, 21.

⁸To attend to.

⁹Thread.

¹⁰The allusion is to Hogarth’s picture of a musician driven almost mad by street noises.

I have sat at an Oratorio (that profanation of the purposes of the cheerful playhouse) watching the faces of the auditory in the pit (what a contrast to Hogarth's Laughing Audience!) immovable, or affecting some faint emotion—till (as some have said that our occupations in the next world will be but a shadow of what delighted us in this) I have imagined myself in some cold Theater in Hades, where some of the *forms* of the earthly one should be kept up, with none of the *enjoyment*; or like that—

—————Party in a parlor,
All silent, and all DAMNED!¹

Above all, those insufferable concertos, and pieces of music, as they are called, do plague and embitter my apprehension.—Words are something; but to be exposed to an endless battery of mere sounds; to be long a dying, to lie stretched upon a rack of roses; to keep up languor by unintermitted effort; to pile honey upon sugar, and sugar upon honey, to an interminable tedious sweetness; to fill up sound with feeling, and strain ideas to keep pace with it; to gaze on empty frames, and be forced to make the pictures for yourself; to read a book, *all stops*,² and be obliged to supply the verbal matter; to invent extempore tragedies to answer to the vague gestures of an inexplicable rambling mime³—these are faint shadows of what I have undergone from a series of the ablest-executed pieces of this empty *instrumental music*.

I deny not, that in the opening of a concert, I have experienced something vastly lulling and agreeable:—afterwards followeth the languor, and the oppression. Like that disappointing book in Patmos;⁴ or, like the comings on of melancholy, described by Burton,⁵ doth music make her first insinuating approaches:—"Most pleasant it is to such as are melancholy given, to walk alone in some solitary grove, betwixt wood and water, by some brook side, and to meditate upon some delightful and pleasant subject, which

shall affect him most, *amabilis insania*, and *mentis gratissimus error*.⁶ A most incomparable delight to build castles in the air, to go smiling to themselves, acting an infinite variety of parts, which they suppose, and strongly imagine, they act, or that they see done.—So delightful these toys at first, they could spend whole days and nights without sleep, even whole years in such contemplations, and fantastical meditations, which are like so many dreams, and will hardly be drawn from them—winding and unwinding themselves as so many clocks, and still pleasing their humors, until at last the SCENE TURNS UPON A SUDDEN, and they being now habituated to such meditations, and solitary places, can endure no company, can think of nothing but harsh and distasteful subjects. Fear, sorrow, suspicion, *sub-rusticus pudor*,⁷ discontent, cares, and weariness of life, surprise them on a sudden, and they can think of nothing else: continually suspecting, no sooner are their eyes open, but this infernal plague of melancholy seizeth on them, and terrifies their souls, representing some dismal object to their minds; which now, by no means, no labor, no persuasions, they can avoid, they cannot be rid of it, they cannot resist."

Something like this "SCENE-TURNING" I have experienced at the evening parties, at the house of my good Catholic friend *Nov*—⁸ who, by the aid of a capital organ, himself the most finished of players, converts his drawing-room into a chapel, his week days into Sundays, and these latter into minor heavens.⁹

When my friend commences upon one of those solemn anthems, which peradventure struck upon my heedless ear, rambling in the side aisles of the dim abbey,¹⁰ some five and thirty years since, waking a new sense, and putting a soul of old religion into my young apprehension—(whether it be *that*, in which

⁶"Delightful madness," and "most pleasing deception of the mind." (Both phrases come from Horace, *Odes* III, iv, 5, and *Epistles* II, ii, 140.)

⁷Awkward shyness (Cicero, *Ad. Fam.* V, xii).

⁸Vincent Novello (1781–1861), organist, father of Mrs. Cowden Clarke.

⁹I have been there, and still would go;

¹⁰'Tis like a little heaven below.—*Dr. Watts*.

(Lamb's Note. From *Divine Songs for Children*, 28th Song.)

¹⁰Westminster Abbey.

¹Quoted from the first edition of Wordsworth's *Peter Bell*. The stanza containing these lines was omitted in later editions.

²All marks of punctuation, with no words.

³An actor playing a part without words.

⁴Revelation, x, 10.

⁵*Anatomy of Melancholy*, I, ii, 6.

the psalmist, weary of the persecutions of bad men, wisheth to himself dove's wings—or *that other*, which with a like measure of sobriety and pathos, inquireth by what means the young man shall best cleanse his mind¹)—a holy calm pervadeth me.—I am for the time

———rapt above earth,

And possess joys not promised at my birth.²

But when this master of the spell, not content to have laid a soul prostrate, goes on, in his power, to inflict more bliss than lies in her capacity to receive,—impatient to overcome her “earthly” with his “heavenly,”³—still pouring in, for protracted hours, fresh waves and fresh from the sea of sound, or from that inexhausted *German* ocean; above which, in triumphant progress, dolphin-seated,⁴ ride those Arions *Haydn* and *Mozart*, with their attendant tritons,⁵ *Bach*, *Beethoven*, and a countless tribe, whom to attempt to reckon up would but plunge me again in the deeps,—I stagger under the weight of harmony, reeling to and fro at my wit's end;—clouds, as of frankincense, oppress me—priests, altars, censers, dazzle before me—the genius of *his* religion hath me in her toils—a shadowy triple tiara invests the brow of my friend, late so naked, so ingenuous—he is Pope,—and by him sits, like as in the anomaly of dreams, a she-Pope too,—tri-coronated like ‘himself!’—I am converted, and yet a Protestant;—at once *malleus hereticorum*,⁶ and myself grand heresiarch:⁷ or three heresies center in my person:—I am Marcion, Ebion, and Cerinthus⁸—Gog and Magog⁹—what not?—till the coming in of the friendly supper-tray dissipates the figment, and a draught of true Lutheran¹⁰

¹These anthems are based on Psalms LV and CXX respectively.

²Quoted by Walton, *Complete Angler*, I, iv.

³1 Corinthians, xv, 48.

⁴According to legend the Lesbian musician Arion, when threatened with death by sailors, so charmed a dolphin with his playing that the dolphin carried him on its back safely to land.

⁵Sea-gods, attendants of Neptune.

⁶The heretics' hammer. The title was given to Johann Faber (1478–1541) because of his treatise, bearing the same title, against Luther.

⁷Leader in heresy.

⁸Heretics in the early days of Christianity.

⁹Unbelievers. See Revelation, xx, 7–9.

beer (in which chiefly my friend shows himself no bigot) at once reconciles me to the rationalities of a purer faith; and restores to me the genuine unterrifying aspects of my pleasant-countenanced host and hostess.

DREAM-CHILDREN; A REVERIE¹¹

CHILDREN love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk¹² (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood.¹³ Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Red-breasts,¹⁴ till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoin-

¹¹*I.e.*, protestant.

¹²Lamb's brother John died on 26 October, 1821, and Lamb is believed to have begun this essay shortly afterwards, in a mood of reminiscence and reverie.

¹³The house is Blakesware, really in Hertfordshire, where Mary Field, Lamb's grandmother, was house-keeper.

¹⁴The scene of this legend is the county of Norfolk, a fact which may have induced Lamb to choose Norfolk in seeking to disguise the identity of Blakesware.

¹⁵Which, at the close of the ballad, cover with leaves the bodies of the murdered children.

ing county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighborhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psalter¹ by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said "those innocents would do her no harm"; and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holidays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the Twelve Cæsars,² that had been Em-

perors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then,—and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir apples,³ which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass, with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings,—I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavors of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L——,⁴ because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out—and yet he loved the old great house

¹Psalter, the Book of Psalms.

²The Roman Emperors from Julius Cæsar to Domitian.

³Fir cones.

⁴Lamb's brother.

and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries—and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great-grand-mother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a mile when I could not walk for pain;—and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarreling with him (for we quarreled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he their poor uncle must have been when the doctor took off his limb.¹ Here the children fell a crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W——n;² and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens—when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentation, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful

features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech; “We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum³ father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe⁴ millions of ages before we have existence, and a name”—and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor armchair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side—but John L. (or James Elia) was gone for ever.

THE PRAISE OF CHIMNEY-SWEEPERS

I LIKE to meet a sweep—understand me—not a grown sweeper—old chimney-sweepers are by no means attractive—but one of those tender novices, blooming through their first nigritude,⁵ the maternal washings not quite effaced from the cheek—such as come forth with the dawn, or somewhat earlier, with their little professional notes sounding like the *peep peep* of a young sparrow; or liker to the matin lark should I pronounce them, in their aerial ascents not seldom anticipating the sun-rise?

I have a kindly yearning toward these dim specks—poor blots—innocent blacknesses—

I reverence these young Africans of our own growth—these almost clergy imps, who sport their cloth⁶ without assumption; and from their little pulpits (the tops of chimneys), in the nipping air of a December morning, preach a lesson of patience to mankind.

When a child, what a mysterious pleasure it was to witness their operation! to see a chit no bigger than one's self enter, one knew not by what process, into what seemed the

³Ann Simmons married a Mr. Bartrum, or Bartram, a London pawnbroker.

⁴The river of forgetfulness, in Hades. In the *Aeneid* (VI, 703–751) Virgil tells how the soul, after many ages and after drinking of this river, returns to earth in a new body.

⁵Blackness.

⁶The dress of their calling.

¹This, as far as is known, did not actually happen.

²Concerning this name see note to *A Chapter on Ears*.

*fauces Averni*¹—to pursue him in imagination, as he went sounding on through so many dark stifling caverns, horrid shades!—to shudder with the idea that “now, surely, he must be lost for ever!”—to revive at hearing his feeble shout of discovered daylight—and then (O fullness of delight) running out of doors, to come just in time to see the sable phenomenon emerge in safety, the brandished weapon of his art victorious like some flag waved over a conquered citadel! I seem to remember having been told that a bad sweep was once left in a stack with his brush, to indicate which way the wind blew. It was an awful spectacle certainly; not much unlike the old stage direction in *Macbeth*,² where the “Apparition of a child crowned with a tree in his hand rises.”

Reader, if thou meetest one of these small gentry in thy early rambles, it is good to give him a penny. It is better to give him twopence. If it be starving weather, and to the proper troubles of his hard occupation, a pair of kibed³ heels (no unusual accompaniment) be superadded, the demand on thy humanity will surely rise to a tester.⁴

There is a composition, the ground-work of which I have understood to be the sweet wood 'yclept⁵ sassafras. This wood boiled down to a kind of tea, and tempered with an infusion of milk and sugar, hath to some tastes a delicacy beyond the China luxury. I know not how thy palate may relish it; for myself, with every deference to the judicious Mr. Read, who hath time out of mind kept open a shop (the only one he avers in London) for the vending of this “wholesome and pleasant beverage, on the south side of Fleet Street, as thou approachest Bridge Street—the only *Salopian house*,”⁶—I have never yet ventured to dip my own particular lip in a basin of his commended ingredients—a cautious premonition to the olfactories constantly whispering to me that my stomach must infallibly, with all due courtesies, decline it. Yet I have seen palates,

otherwise not uninstructed in dietetical elegances, sup it up with avidity.

I know not by what particular conformation of the organ it happens, but I have always found that this composition is surprisingly gratifying to the palate of a young chimney-sweeper—whether the oily particles (sassafras is slightly oleaginous) do attenuate and soften the fuliginous⁷ concretions, which are sometimes found (in dissections) to adhere to the roof of the mouth in these unfledged practitioners; or whether Nature, sensible that she had mingled too much of bitter wood⁸ in the lot of these raw victims, caused to grow out of the earth her sassafras for a sweet lenitive⁹—but so it is, that no possible taste or odor to the senses of a young chimney-sweeper can convey a delicate excitement comparable to this mixture. Being penniless, they will yet hang their black heads over the ascending steam, to gratify one sense if possible, seemingly no less pleased than those domestic animals—cats—when they purr over a new-found sprig of valerian.¹⁰ There is something more in these sympathies than philosophy can inculcate.

Now albeit Mr. Read boasteth, not without reason, that his is the *only Salopian house*; yet be it known to thee, reader—if thou art one who keepest what are called good hours, thou art haply ignorant of the fact—he hath a race of industrious imitators, who from stalls, and under open sky, dispense the same savory mess to humbler customers, at that dead time of the dawn, when (as extremes meet) the rake, reeling home from his midnight cups, and the hard-handed artisan leaving his bed to resume the premature labors of the day, jostle, not unfrequently to the manifest disconcerting of the former, for the honors of the pavement. It is the time when, in summer, between the expired and the not yet relumined kitchen-fires, the kennels of our fair metropolis give forth their least satisfactory odors. The rake, who wisheth to dissipate his o'er-night vapors in more grateful coffee, curses the ungenial fume, as he passeth; but the artisan stops to taste, and blesses the fragrant breakfast.

¹The jaws of Hell (*Æneid*, VI, 201).

²Act IV, sc. i.

³Chapped.

⁴Sixpence.

⁵Called.

⁶Saloop was the name of this beverage, whence salopian.

⁷Sooty.

⁸Wormwood.

⁹Softener of pain.

¹⁰Or catnip.

This is *Saloop*—the precocious herb-woman's darling—the delight of the early gardener, who transports his smoking cabbages by break of day from Hammersmith to Covent Garden's famed piazzas¹—the delight, and, oh I fear, too often the envy, of the unpenned sweep. Him shouldest thou haply encounter, with his dim visage pendent over the grateful steam, regale him with a sumptuous basin (it will cost thee but three halfpennies) and a slice of delicate bread and butter (an added halfpenny)—so may thy culinary fires, eased of the o'er-charged secretions from thy worse-placed hospitalities, curl up a lighter volume to the welkin²—so may the descending soot never taint thy costly well-ingrediened soups—nor the odious cry, quick-reaching from street to street, of the *fired chimney*, invite the rattling engines from ten adjacent parishes, to disturb for a casual scintillation³ thy peace and pocket!

I am by nature extremely susceptible of street affronts; the jeers and taunts of the populace; the low-bred triumph they display over the casual trip, or splashed stocking, of a gentleman. Yet can I endure the jocularity of a young sweep with something more than forgiveness.—In the last winter but one, pacing along Cheapside with my accustomed precipitation when I walk westward, a treacherous slide brought me upon my back in an instant. I scrambled up with pain and shame enough—yet outwardly trying to face it down, as if nothing had happened—when the roguish grin of one of these young wits encountered me. There he stood, pointing me out with his dusky finger to the mob, and to a poor woman (I suppose his mother) in particular, till the tears for the exquisiteness of the fun (so he thought it) worked themselves out at the corners of his poor red eyes, red from many a previous weeping, and soot-inflamed, yet twinkling through all with such a joy, snatched out of desolation, that Hogarth—but Hogarth has got him already (how could he miss him?) in the March to Finchley, grinning at the pie-man—there he stood, as he stands in the pic-

ture, irremovable, as if the jest was to last for ever—with such a maximum of glee, and minimum of mischief, in his mirth—for the grin of a genuine sweep hath absolutely no malice in it—that I could have been content, if the honor of a gentleman might endure it, to have remained his butt and his mockery till midnight.

I am by theory obdurate to the seductiveness of what are called a fine set of teeth. Every pair of rosy lips (the ladies must pardon me) is a casket, presumably holding such jewels; but, methinks, they should take leave to “air” them as frugally as possible. The fine lady, or fine gentleman, who show me their teeth, show me bones. Yet must I confess, that from the mouth of a true sweep a display (even to ostentation) of those white and shining ossifications, strikes me as an agreeable anomaly in manners, and an allowable piece of foppery. It is, as when

A sable cloud

Turns forth her silver lining on the night.⁴

It is like some remnant of gentry not quite extinct; a badge of better days; a hint of nobility:—and, doubtless, under the obscuring darkness and double night of their forlorn disguisement, oftentimes lurketh good blood, and gentle conditions, derived from lost ancestry, and a lapsed pedigree. The premature apprenticesments of these tender victims give but too much encouragement, I fear, to clandestine, and almost infantile abductions; the seeds of civility and true courtesy, so often discernible in these young grafts (not otherwise to be accounted for), plainly hint at some forced adoptions; many noble Rachels⁵ mourning for their children, even in our days, countenance the fact; the tales of fairy-spiriting may shadow a lamentable verity, and the recovery of the young Montagu⁶ be but a solitary instance of good fortune, out of many irreparable and hopeless *defiliations*.⁷

In one of the state-beds at Arundel Castle,⁸

⁴Milton, *Comus*, 221–2.

⁵Jeremiah, xxxi, 15.

⁶Edward Wortley Montagu (1713–1776), son of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, several times ran away from Westminster School and on one of these occasions became for a time a chimney-sweeper.

⁷Losses of sons.

⁸The Sussex seat of the Dukes of Norfolk.

¹*I.e.*, to London's fruit and flower market.

²Sky.

³Eruption of sparks.

a few years since—under a ducal canopy—(that seat of the Howards is an object of curiosity to visitors, chiefly for its beds, in which the late duke was especially a connoisseur)—encircled with curtains of delicatest crimson, with starry coronets inwoven—folded between a pair of sheets whiter and softer than the lap where Venus lulled Ascanius¹—was discovered by chance, after all methods of search had failed, at noon-day, fast asleep, a lost chimney-sweeper. The little creature, having somehow confounded his passage among the intricacies of those lordly chimneys, by some unknown aperture had alighted upon this magnificent chamber; and, tired with his tedious explorations, was unable to resist the delicious invitement to repose which he there saw exhibited; so, creeping between the sheets very quietly, laid his black head upon the pillow, and slept like a young Howard.

Such is the account given to the visitors at the Castle.—But I cannot help seeming to perceive a confirmation of what I have just hinted at in this story. A high instinct was at work in the case, or I am mistaken. Is it probable that a poor child of that description, with whatever weariness he might be visited, would have ventured, under such a penalty as he would be taught to expect, to uncover the sheets of a Duke's bed, and deliberately to lay himself down between them, when the rug, or the carpet, presented an obvious couch, still far above his pretensions—is this probable, I would ask, if the great power of nature, which I contend for, had not been manifested within him, prompting to the adventure? Doubtless this young nobleman (for such my mind misgives me that he must be) was allured by some memory, not amounting to full consciousness, of his condition in infancy, when he was used to be lapped by his mother, or his nurse, in just such sheets as he there found, into which he was but now creeping back as into his proper *incunabula*,² and resting-place.—By no other theory than by this sentiment of a pre-existent state (as I may call it), can I explain a deed so venturous, and, indeed, upon any other system, so in-

decorous, in this tender, but unseasonable, sleeper.

My pleasant friend JEM WHITE³ was so impressed with a belief of metamorphoses like this frequently taking place, that in some sort to reverse the wrongs of fortune in these poor changelings, he instituted an annual feast of chimney-sweepers, at which it was his pleasure to officiate as host and waiter. It was a solemn supper held in Smithfield, upon the yearly return of the fair of St. Bartholomew.⁴ Cards were issued a week before to the master-sweeps in and about the metropolis, confining the invitation to their younger fry. Now and then an elderly stripling would get in among us, and be good-naturedly winked at; but our main body were infantry. One unfortunate wight, indeed, who relying upon his dusky suit, had intruded himself into our party, but by tokens was providentially discovered in time to be no chimney-sweeper (all is not soot which looks so), was quitted⁵ out of the presence with universal indignation, as not having on the wedding garment;⁶ but in general the greatest harmony prevailed. The place chosen was a convenient spot among the pens, at the north side of the fair, not so far distant as to be impervious to the agreeable hubbub of that vanity;⁷ but remote enough not to be obvious to the interruption of every gaping spectator in it. The guests assembled about seven. In those little temporary parlors three tables were spread with napery, not so fine as substantial, and at every board a comely hostess presided with her pan of hissing sausages. The nostrils of the young rogues dilated at the savor. JAMES WHITE, as head waiter, had charge of the first table; and myself, with our trusty companion BIGON⁸ ordinarily ministered to the other two. There was clambering and jostling, you may be sure, who

¹James White (1775-1820), author of *Original Letters of Sir John Falstaff* (1796). He was a school-fellow of Lamb at Christ's Hospital.

²Held at Smithfield on 3 September until its abolition in the middle of the nineteenth century.

³Hurled.

⁴*I.e.*, the garb of a sweep. See St. Matthew, xxii, 11.

⁵The word is used in allusion to Bunyan's Vanity Fair in *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

⁶John Fenwick, who is also mentioned in *The Two Races of Men*.

¹Ascanius was the son of Æneas, whose mother was Venus.

²Cradle.

should get at the first table—for Rochester¹ in his maddest days could not have done the humors of the scene with more spirit than my friend. After some general expression of thanks for the honor the company had done him, his inaugural ceremony was to clasp the greasy waist of old dame Ursula² (the fattest of the three), that stood frying and fretting, half-blessing, half-cursing “the gentleman,” and imprint upon her chaste lips a tender salute, whereat the universal host would set up a shout that tore the concave, while hundreds of grinning teeth startled the night with their brightness.³ O it was a pleasure to see the sable youngers⁴ lick in the unctuous meat, with *his* more unctuous sayings—how he would fit the tit-bits to the puny mouths, reserving the lengthier links for the seniors—how he would intercept a morsel even in the jaws of some young desperado, declaring it “must to the pan again to be browned, for it was not fit for a gentleman’s eating”—how he would recommend this slice of white bread, or that piece of kissing-crust,⁵ to a tender juvenile, advising them all to have a care of cracking their teeth, which were their best patrimony,—how genteelly he would deal about the small ale, as if it were wine, naming the brewer, and protesting, if it were not good he should lose their custom; with a special recommendation to wipe the lip before drinking. Then we had our toasts—“The King,”—the “Cloth,”⁶—which, whether they understood or not, was equally diverting and flattering;—and for a crowning sentiment, which never failed, “May the Brush supersede the Laurel.”⁷ All these, and fifty other fancies, which were rather felt than comprehended by his guests, would he utter, standing upon tables, and prefacing every sentiment with a “Gentlemen, give me leave to propose so and so,” which was a prodigious comfort to those

young orphans; every now and then stuffing into his mouth (for it did not do to be squeamish on these occasions) indiscriminate pieces of those reeking sausages, which pleased them mightily, and was the savoriest part, you may believe, of the entertainment.

Golden lads and lasses must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust—⁸

JAMES WHITE is extinct, and with him these suppers have long ceased. He carried away with him half the fun of the world when he died—of my world at least. His old clients look for him among the pens; and, missing him, reproach the altered feast of St. Bartholomew, and the glory of Smithfield departed for ever.

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG

MANKIND, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend M.⁹ was obliging enough to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing or biting it from the living animal, just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius¹⁰ in the second chapter of his *Mundane Mutations*, where he designates a kind of golden age by the term *Cho-fang*, literally the Cook’s holiday. The manuscript goes on to say, that the art of roasting, or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother) was accidentally discovered in the manner following. The swine-herd, Ho-ti, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast¹¹ for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son Bo-bo, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as youngers of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which kindling quickly, spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion, till it

¹The Earl of Rochester (1647–1680), a notorious rake.

²Lamb took this name from a character in Ben Jonson’s *Bartholomew Fair*.

³Cf. *Paradise Lost*, I, 541.

⁴Youngsters.

⁵The soft part of a loaf’s crust, where loaves have touched each other in baking.

⁶*I.e.*, the profession of chimney-sweepers.

⁷The brush is taken to be emblematic of the chimney-sweeper, as the laurel is emblematic of the poet.

⁸*Cymbeline*, IV, ii, 262–3.

⁹Thomas Manning (1772–1840), who spent some years in China. The central idea of this essay is a commonplace, but there is no reason for doubting Lamb’s statement, here and in a letter to Bernard Barton, that he heard it from Manning.

¹⁰Chinese philosopher of the sixth century B.C. The reference is of Lamb’s invention.

¹¹Beech nuts.

was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage (a sorry antediluvian makeshift of a building, you may think it), what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed¹ pigs, no less than nine in number, perished. China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East from the remotest periods that we read of. Bo-bo was in utmost consternation, as you may think, not so much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labor of an hour or two, at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odor assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experienced. What could it proceed from?—not from the burned cottage—he had smelt that smell before—indeed this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young fire-brand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed, or flower. A premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burned his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tasted—*crackling!* Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now, still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding, that it was the pig that smelt so, and the pig that tasted so delicious; and, surrendering himself up to the newborn pleasure, he fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hailstones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies.

The tickling pleasure which he experienced in his lower regions, had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued.

"You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring? Is it not enough that you have burned me down three houses with your dog's tricks, and be hanged to you, but you must be eating fire, and I know not what—what have you got there, I say?"

"O, father, the pig, the pig, do come and taste how nice the burnt pig eats."

The ears of Ho-ti tingled with horror. He cursed his son, and he cursed himself that ever he should beget a son that should eat burnt pig.

Bo-bo, whose scent was wonderfully sharpened since morning, soon raked out another pig, and fairly rending it asunder, thrust the lesser half by main force into the fists of Ho-ti, still shouting out "Eat, eat, eat the burnt pig, father, only taste—O Lord,"—with such-like barbarous ejaculations, cramming all the while as if he would choke.

Ho-ti trembled in every joint while he grasped the abominable thing, wavering whether he should not put his son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling scorching his fingers, as it had done his son's, and applying the same remedy to them, he in his turn tasted some of its flavor, which, make what sour mouths he would for a pretense, proved not altogether displeasing to him. In conclusion (for the manuscript here is a little tedious), both father and son fairly sat down to the mess, and never left off till they had despatched all that remained of the litter.

Bo-bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbors would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them. Nevertheless, strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti's cottage was burned down now more frequently than ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out

¹Newly born.

in broad day, others in the night-time. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever. At length they were watched, the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Pekin, then an inconsiderable assize town.¹ Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burnt pig, of which the culprits stood accused, might be handed into the box. He handled it, and they all handled it, and burning their fingers, as Bo-bo and his father had done before them, and nature prompting to each of them the same remedy, against the face of all the facts, and the clearest charge which judge had ever given, —to the surprise of the whole court, town-folk, strangers, reporters, and all present—without leaving the box, or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision: and, when the court was dismissed, went privily, and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or money. In a few days his Lordship's town house was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fires in every direction. Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all over the district. The insurance offices one and all shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world. Thus this custom of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke,² who made a discovery, that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (*burnt*, as they called it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a gridiron. Roasting by the string, or spit, came in a century or two later, I forget in whose dynasty. By such

slow degrees, concludes the manuscript, do the most useful, and seemingly the most obvious arts, make their way among mankind.—

Without placing too implicit faith in the account above given, it must be agreed, that if a worthy pretext for so dangerous an experiment as setting houses on fire (especially in these days) could be assigned in favor of any culinary object, that pretext and excuse might be found in ROAST PIG.

Of all the delicacies in the whole *mundus edibilis*,³ I will maintain it to be the most delicate—*princeps obsoniorum*.⁴

I speak not of your grown porkers—things between pig and pork—those hobbydehoys⁵—but a young and tender suckling—under a moon old—guiltless as yet of the sty—with no original speck of the *amor immunditiæ*,⁶ the hereditary failing of the first parent, yet manifest—his voice as yet not broken, but something between a childish treble, and a grumble—the mild forerunner, or *prælude*,⁷ of a grunt.

He must be roasted. I am not ignorant that our ancestors ate them seethed, or boiled—but what a sacrifice of the exterior tement!⁸

There is no flavor comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted, *crackling*, as it is well called—the very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance—with the adhesive oleaginous—O call it not fat—but an indefinable sweetness growing up to it—the tender blossoming of fat—fat cropped in the bud—taken in the shoot—in the first innocence—the cream and quintessence of the child-pig's yet pure food—the lean, no lean, but a kind of animal manna⁹—or, rather, fat and lean (if it must be so), so blended and running into each other, that both together make but one ambrosian¹⁰ result, or common substance.

Behold him, while he is doing¹¹—it seemeth rather a refreshing warmth, than a scorching

³World of eatables. ⁴King of dainties.

⁵Youths between boys and men.

⁶Love of dirt. ⁷Prelude. ⁸Skin.

⁹Animal food sent from heaven. Concerning manna see Exodus, xvi, 14-15.

¹⁰In Greek mythology ambrosia was the food of the gods.

¹¹Being cooked.

¹In England the county town in which sessions of a superior court are held.

²English philosopher (1632-1704).

heat, that he is so passive to. How equably he twirleth round the string!¹—Now he is just done. To see the extreme sensibility of that tender age, he hath wept out his pretty eyes—radiant jellies—shooting stars—²

See him in the dish, his second cradle, how meek he lieth!—wouldst thou have had this innocent grow up to the grossness and indolence which too often accompany maturer swinehood? Ten to one he would have proved a glutton, a sloven, an obstinate, disagreeable animal—wallowing in all manner of filthy conversation³—from these sins he is happily snatched away—

Ere sin could blight, or sorrow fade,
Death came with timely care—⁴

his memory is odoriferous—no clown curseth, while his stomach half rejecteth, the rank bacon—no coalheaver bolteth him in reeking sausages—he hath a fair sepulcher in the grateful stomach of the judicious epicure—and for such a tomb might be content to die.

He is the best of sapor.⁵ Pine-apple is great. She is indeed almost too transcendent—a delight, if not sinful, yet so like to sinning, that really a tender-conscienced person would do well to pause—too ravishing for mortal taste, she woundeth and exoriatheth⁶ the lips that approach her—like lovers' kisses, she biteth—she is a pleasure bordering on pain from the fierceness and insanity of her relish—but she stoppeth at the palate—she meddleth not with the appetite⁷—and the coarsest hunger might barter her consistently for a mutton chop.

Pig—let me speak his praise—is no less provocative of the appetite, than he is satisfactory to the criticalness of the censorious palate. The strong man may batten on him, and the weakling refuseth not his mild juices.

Unlike to mankind's mixed characters, a bundle of virtues and vices, inexplicably intertisted, and not to be unraveled without hazard, he is—good throughout. No part of him is better or worse than another. He

helpeth, as far as his little means extend, all around. He is the least envious⁸ of banquets. He is all neighbors' fare.

I am one of those who freely and ungrudgingly impart a share of the good things of this life which fall to their lot (few as mine are in this kind) to a friend. I protest I take as great an interest in my friend's pleasures, his relishes, and proper satisfactions, as in mine own. "Presents," I often say, "endear Absents." Hares, pheasants, partridges, snipes, barn-door chickens (those "tame villatic fowl"⁹), capons, plovers, brawn,¹⁰ barrels of oysters, I dispense as freely as I receive them. I love to taste them, as it were, upon the tongue of my friend. But a stop must be put somewhere. One would not, like Lear, "give everything."¹¹ I make my stand upon pig. Methinks it is an ingratitude to the Giver of all good flavors, to extra-domiciliate, or send out of the house, slightly (under pretext of friendship, or I know not what), a blessing so particularly adapted, predestined, I may say, to my individual palate—It argues an insensibility.

I remember a touch of conscience in this kind at school. My good old aunt,¹² who never parted from me at the end of a holiday without stuffing a sweetmeat, or some nice thing, into my pocket, had dismissed me one evening with a smoking plum-cake, fresh from the oven. In my way to school (it was over London Bridge) a gray-headed old beggar saluted me (I have no doubt at this time of day that he was a counterfeit). I had no pence to console him with, and in the vanity of self-denial, and the very coxcombry of charity, school-boy-like, I made him a present of—the whole cake! I walked on a little, buoyed up, as one is on such occasions, with a sweet soothing of self-satisfaction; but before I had got to the end of the bridge, my better feelings returned, and I burst into tears, thinking how ungrateful I had been to my good aunt, to go and give her good gift away to a stranger

⁸*I.e.*, he gives no guest cause to envy another, for "he is—good throughout."

⁹Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, l. 1695.

¹⁰Boar's meat.

¹¹*King Lear*, II, iv, 253.

¹²Probably Sarah Lamb, whom Lamb called Aunt Hetty.

¹By which he hangs while roasting.

²It was once believed that shooting stars left jellies where they fell.

³Ways of life. ⁴Coleridge, *Epitaph on an Infant*.

⁵Flavors. ⁶Takes the skin off.

⁷*I.e.*, she gratifies the taste but does not satisfy the stomach.

that I had never seen before, and who might be a bad man for aught I knew; and then I thought of the pleasure my aunt would be taking in thinking that I—I myself, and not another—would eat her nice cake—and what should I say to her the next time I saw her—how naughty I was to part with her pretty present—and the odor of that spicy cake came back upon my recollection, and the pleasure and the curiosity I had taken in seeing her make it, and her joy when she sent it to the oven, and how disappointed she would feel that I had never had a bit of it in my mouth at last—and I blamed my impertinent spirit of alms-giving, and out-of-place hypocrisy of goodness, and above all I wished never to see the face again of that insidious, good-for-nothing, old gray impostor.

Our ancestors were nice¹ in their method of sacrificing these tender victims. We read of pigs whipped to death with something of a shock, as we hear of any other obsolete custom. The age of discipline is gone by, or it would be curious to inquire (in a philosophical light merely) what effect this process might have towards intenerating and dulcifying² a substance, naturally so mild and dulcet as the flesh of young pigs. It looks like refining a violet.³ Yet we should be cautious, while we condemn the inhumanity, how we censure the wisdom of the practice. It might impart a gusto——

I remember an hypothesis, argued upon by the young students, when I was at St. Omer's,⁴ and maintained with much learning and pleasantry on both sides, "Whether, supposing that the flavor of a pig who obtained his death by whipping (*per flagellationem extremam*) superadded a pleasure upon the palate of a man more intense than any possible suffering we can conceive in the animal, is man justified in using that method of putting the animal to death?" I forget the decision.

His sauce should be considered. Decidedly, a few bread crumbs, done up with his liver and brains, and a dash of mild sage. But, banish, dear Mrs. Cook, I beseech you,

¹Discriminating.

²Making tender and sweet.

³*Cf. King John*, IV, ii, 10-12.

⁴A Jesuit college for English youths, in France. Lamb, of course, was never there.

the whole onion tribe. Barbecue⁵ your whole hogs to your palate, steep them in shalots,⁶ stuff them out with plantations of the rank and guilty garlic; you cannot poison them, or make them stronger than they are—but consider, he is a weakling—a flower.

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN⁷

*Sera tamen respexit
Libertas.*⁸ VIRGIL.

A clerk I was in London gay.
O'KEEFE.⁹

IF PERADVENTURE, Reader, it has been thy lot to waste the golden years of thy life—thy shining youth—in the irksome confinement of an office; to have thy prison days prolonged through middle age down to decrepitude and silver hairs, without hope of release or respite; to have lived to forget that there are such things as holidays, or to remember them but as the prerogatives of childhood; then, and then only, will you be able to appreciate my deliverance.

It is now six and thirty years since I took my seat at the desk in Mincing Lane. Melancholy was the transition at fourteen from the abundant playtime, and the frequently intervening vacations of school days, to the eight, nine, and sometimes ten hours' a-day attendance at a counting-house. But time partially reconciles us to anything. I gradually became content—doggedly content, as wild animals in cages.

It is true I had my Sundays to myself; but Sundays, admirable as the institution of them is for purposes of worship, are for that very reason the very worst adapted for days of unbending and recreation. In particular, there is a gloom for me attendant upon a city Sunday, a weight in the air. I miss the cheerful cries of London, the music, and the ballad-singers—the buzz and stirring mur-

⁵To roast whole.

⁶Small onions.

⁷Lamb disguises his real employment, but in other respects this essay is substantially a record of fact.

⁸Liberty, though late, nevertheless visited me (from the first *Eclogue*, l. 27).

⁹John O'Keefe (1747-1833), a writer of farces and comic operas. The song has also been attributed to George Colman.

mur of the streets. Those eternal bells depress me. The closed shops repel me. Prints, pictures, all the glittering and endless succession of knacks and gewgaws, and ostentatiously displayed wares of tradesmen, which make a weekday saunter through the less busy parts of the metropolis so delightful—are shut out. No book-stalls deliciously to idle over—No busy faces to recreate the idle man who contemplates them ever passing by—the very face of business a charm by contrast to his temporary relaxation from it. Nothing to be seen but unhappy countenances—or half-happy at best—of emancipated 'prentices and little tradesfolks, with here and there a servant maid that has got leave to go out, who, slaving all the week, with the habit has lost almost the capacity of enjoying a free hour; and livelily expressing the hollowness of a day's pleasuring. The very strollers in the fields on that day looked anything but comfortable.

But besides Sundays I had a day at Easter, and a day at Christmas, with a full week in the summer to go and air myself in my native fields of Hertfordshire.¹ This last was a great indulgence; and the prospect of its recurrence, I believe, alone kept me up through the year, and made my durance tolerable. But when the week came round, did the glittering phantom of the distance keep touch with me? or rather was it not a series of seven uneasy days, spent in restless pursuit of pleasure, and a wearisome anxiety to find out how to make the most of them? Where was the quiet, where the promised rest? Before I had a taste of it, it was vanished. I was at the desk again, counting upon the fifty-one tedious weeks that must intervene before such another snatch would come. Still the prospect of its coming threw something of an illumination upon the darker side of my captivity. Without it, as I have said, I could scarcely have sustained my thralldom.

Independently of the rigors of attendance, I have ever been haunted with a sense (perhaps a mere caprice) of incapacity for business. This, during my latter years, had increased to such a degree that it was visible in all the lines of my countenance. My

health and my good spirits flagged. I had perpetually a dread of some crisis, to which I should be found unequal. Besides my daylight servitude, I served over again all night in my sleep, and would awake with terrors of imaginary false entries, errors in my accounts, and the like. I was fifty years of age, and no prospect of emancipation presented itself. I had grown to my desk, as it were; and the wood had entered into my soul.

My fellows in the office would sometimes rally me upon the trouble legible in my countenance; but I did not know that it had raised the suspicions of any of my employers, when on the 5th of last month, a day ever to be remembered by me, L—, the junior partner in the firm, calling me on one side, directly taxed me with my bad looks, and frankly inquired the cause of them. So taxed, I honestly made confession of my infirmity, and added that I was afraid I should eventually be obliged to resign his service. He spoke some words of course to hearten me, and there the matter rested. A whole week I remained laboring under the impression that I had acted imprudently in my disclosure; that I had foolishly given a handle against myself, and had been anticipating my own dismissal. A week passed in this manner, the most anxious one, I verily believe in my whole life, when on the evening of the 12th of April, just as I was about quitting my desk to go home (it might be about eight o'clock) I received an awful summons to attend the presence of the whole assembled firm in the formidable back parlor. I thought, now my time is surely come, I have done for myself, I am going to be told that they have no longer occasion for me. L—, I could see, smiled at the terror I was in, which was a little relief to me,—when to my utter astonishment B—, the eldest partner, began a formal harangue to me on the length of my services, my very meritorious conduct during the whole of the time (the deuce, thought I, how did he find out that? I protest I never had the confidence to think as much). He went on to descant² on the expediency of retiring at a certain time of life (how my heart panted!) and asking me a few questions as to the

¹An exaggeration, as Lamb was born and brought up in London, though his mother and grandmother were natives of Hertfordshire.

²To discourse at large.

amount of my own property, of which I have a little, ended with a proposal, to which his three partners nodded a grave assent, that I should accept from the house, which I had served so well, a pension for life to the amount of two-thirds of my accustomed salary¹—a magnificent offer! I do not know what I answered between surprise and gratitude, but it was understood that I accepted their proposal, and I was told that I was free from that hour to leave their service. I stammered out a bow, and at just ten minutes after eight I went home—for ever. This noble benefit—gratitude forbids me to conceal their names—I owe to the kindness of the most munificent firm in the world—the house of Boldero, Merryweather, Bosanquet, and Lacy.²

*Esto perpetua!*³

For the first day or two I felt stunned, overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy, and knowing that I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the Old Bastile, suddenly let loose after a forty years' confinement. I could scarce trust myself with myself. It was like passing out of Time into Eternity—for it is a sort of Eternity for a man to have his Time all to himself. It seemed to me that I had more time on my hands than I could ever manage. From a poor man, poor in Time, I was suddenly lifted up into a vast revenue; I could see no end of my possessions; I wanted some steward, or judicious bailiff, to manage my estates in Time for me. And here let me caution persons grown old in active business, not lightly, nor without weighing their own resources, to forego their customary employment all at once, for there may be danger in it. I feel it by myself, but I know that my resources are sufficient; and now that those first giddy raptures have subsided, I have a quiet home-feeling of the blessedness of my condition. I am in no hurry. Having all holidays, I am as though I had none. If Time hung heavy upon me, I

could walk it away; but I do *not* walk all day long, as I used to do in those old transient holidays, thirty miles a day, to make the most of them. If Time were troublesome, I could read it away, but I do *not* read in that violent measure, with which, having no Time my own but candlelight Time, I used to weary out my head and eye-sight in by-gone winters. I walk, read, or scribble (as now) just when the fit seizes me. I no longer hunt after pleasure; I let it come to me. I am like the man

—That's born, and has his years come to him,
In some green desert.⁴

"Years," you will say; "what is this superannuated simpleton calculating upon? He has already told us he is past fifty."

I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but deduct out of them the hours which I have lived to other people, and not to myself, and you will find me still a young fellow. For *that* is the only true Time, which a man can properly call his own, that which he has all to himself; the rest, though in some sense he may be said to live it, is other people's time, not his. The remnant of my poor days, long or short, is at least multiplied for me threefold. My ten next years, if I stretch so far, will be as long as any preceding thirty. 'Tis a fair rule-of-three sum.

Among the strange fantasies which beset me at the commencement of my freedom, and of which all traces are not yet gone, one was, that a vast tract of time had intervened since I quitted the Counting House. I could not conceive of it as an affair of yesterday. The partners, and the clerks with whom I had for so many years, and for so many hours in each day of the year, been so closely associated—being suddenly removed from them—they seemed as dead to me. There is a fine passage, which may serve to illustrate this fancy, in a Tragedy⁵ by Sir Robert Howard, speaking of a friend's death:—

—'Twas but just now he went away;
I have not since had time to shed a tear;
And yet the distance does the same appear
As if he had been a thousand years from me,
Time takes no measure in Eternity.

¹Lamb's salary was £730 the year. He was granted a pension of £450.

²Fictitious names, of course, standing for the directors of the East India Company.

³May it be eternal.

⁴Middleton, *Mayor of Queenborough*, I, i, 102-3.

⁵*The Vestal Virgin, or the Roman Ladies*. Howard was Dryden's brother-in-law and lived 1626-1698.

To dissipate this awkward feeling, I have been fain to go among them once or twice since; to visit my old desk-fellows—my co-brethren of the quill—that I had left below in the state militant. Not all the kindness with which they received me could quite restore to me that pleasant familiarity, which I had heretofore enjoyed among them. We cracked some of our old jokes, but methought they went off but faintly. My old desk; the peg where I hung my hat, were appropriated to another. I knew it must be, but I could not take it kindly. D—I take me if I did not feel some remorse—beast, if I had not,—at quitting my old compeers, the faithful partners of my toils for six and thirty years, that smoothed for me with their jokes and conundrums the ruggedness of my professional road. Had it been so rugged then after all? or was I a coward simply? Well, it is too late to repent; and I also know that these suggestions are a common fallacy of the mind on such occasions. But my heart smote me. I had violently broken the bands betwixt us. It was at least not courteous. I shall be some time before I get quite reconciled to the separation. Farewell, old cronies, yet not for long, for again and again I will come among ye, if I shall have your leave. Farewell, Ch—, dry, sarcastic, and friendly! Do—, mild, slow to move, and gentlemanly! Pl—,¹ officious to do, and to volunteer, good services!—and thou, thou dreary pile, fit mansion for a Gresham or a Whittington² of old, stately House of Merchants; with thy labyrinthine passages, and light-excluding, pent-up offices, where candles for one half the year supplied the place of the sun's light; unhealthy contributor to my weal, stern fosterer of my living, farewell! In thee remain, and not in the obscure collection of some wandering bookseller, my “works!”³ There let them rest, as I do from my labors, piled on thy massy shelves, more MSS. in folio than ever Aquinas left, and full as useful! My mantle I bequeath among ye.

A fortnight has passed since the date of my first communication. At that period I was approaching to tranquillity, but had not reached it. I boasted of a calm indeed, but it was comparative only. Something of the first flutter was left; an unsettling sense of novelty; the dazzle to weak eyes of unaccustomed light. I missed my old chains, forsooth, as if they had been some necessary part of my apparel. I was a poor Carthusian,⁴ from strict cellular discipline suddenly by some revolution returned upon the world. I am now as if I had never been other than my own master. It is natural to me to go where I please, to do what I please. I find myself at eleven o'clock in the day in Bond Street, and it seems to me that I have been sauntering there at that very hour for years past. I digress into Soho, to explore a book-stall. Methinks I have been thirty years a collector. There is nothing strange nor new in it. I find myself before a fine picture in the morning. Was it ever otherwise? What is become of Fish Street Hill? Where is Fenchurch Street? Stones of old Mincing Lane which I have worn with my daily pilgrimage for six and thirty years, to the footsteps of what toil-worn clerk are your everlasting flints now vocal? I indent the gayer flags of Pall Mall. It is 'Change time, and I am strangely among the Elgin marbles.⁵ It was no hyperbole when I ventured to compare the change in my condition to a passing into another world. Time stands still in a manner to me. I have lost all distinction of season. I do not know the day of the week, or of the month. Each day used to be individually felt by me in its reference to the foreign post days; in its distance from, or propinquity to the next Sunday. I had my Wednesday feelings, my Saturday nights' sensations. The genius of each day was upon me distinctly during the whole of it, affecting my appetite, spirits, *etc.* The phantom of the next day, with the dreary five to follow, sat as a load upon my poor Sabbath recreations. What charm has washed the Ethiop white?—What is gone of Black Monday? All days are the same. Sunday itself—that unfortunate failure of a holiday as it too often proved, what with my

¹These are thought to be John Chambers, Henry Dodwell, and W. D. Plumley.

²Sir Thomas Gresham and Sir Richard Whittington.

³*I.e.*, the ledgers which Lamb had filled with accounts. The 1570 edition of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas filled 17 folio volumes.

⁴*I.e.*, a monk.

⁵They were brought to the British Museum in 1816.

sense of its fugitiveness, and over-care to get the greatest quantity of pleasure out of it—is melted down into a week day. I can spare to go to church now, without grudging the huge cattle¹ which it used to seem to cut out of the holiday. I have Time for everything. I can visit a sick friend. I can interrupt the man of much occupation when he is busiest. I can insult over him with an invitation to take a day's pleasure with me to Windsor this fine May-morning. It is Lucretian pleasure² to behold the poor drudges, whom I have left behind in the world, carking and caring; like horses in a mill, drudging on in the same eternal round—and what is it all for? A man can never have too much Time to himself, nor too little to do. Had I a little son, I would christen him NOTHING-TO-DO; he should do nothing. Man, I verily believe, is out of his element as long as he is operative. I am altogether for the life contemplative. Will no kindly earthquake come and swallow up those accursed cotton-mills? Take me that lumber of a desk there, and bowl it down

As low as to the fiends.³

I am no longer * * * * *, clerk to the firm of, *etc.* I am Retired Leisure. I am to be met with in trim gardens. I am already come to be known by my vacant face and careless gesture, perambulating at no fixed pace nor with any settled purpose. I walk about; not to and from. They tell me, a certain *cum dignitate*⁴ air, that has been buried so long with my other good parts, has begun to shoot forth in my person. I grow into gentility perceptibly. When I take up a newspaper it is to read the state of the opera. *Opus operatum est.*⁵ I have done all that I came into this world to do. I have worked taskwork, and have the rest of the day to myself.

¹Slice.

²The allusion is to a famous passage at the beginning of Bk. II of Lucretius's *On the Nature of Things*. There is a paraphrase of the passage in Bacon's essay *Of Truth*.

³*Hamlet*, II, ii, 519.

⁴The allusion is to the phrase *otium cum dignitate*, ease with dignity.

⁵The work has been completed.

POPULAR FALLACIES

XIV

THAT WE SHOULD RISE WITH THE LARK

AT WHAT precise minute that little airy musician doffs his night gear, and prepares to tune up his unseasonable matins, we are not naturalists enough to determine. But for a mere human gentleman—that has no orchestra business to call him from his warm bed to such preposterous exercises—we take ten, or half after ten (eleven, of course, during this Christmas solstice⁶), to be the very earliest hour, at which he can begin to think of abandoning his pillow. To think of it, we say; for to do it in earnest requires another half-hour's good consideration. Not but there are pretty sun-risings, as we are told, and such like gawds,⁷ abroad in the world, in summer time especially, some hours before what we have assigned; which a gentleman may see, as they say, only for getting up. But, having been tempted once or twice, in earlier life, to assist at those ceremonies, we confess our curiosity abated. We are no longer ambitious of being the sun's courtiers, to attend at his morning levees.⁸ We hold the good hours of the dawn too sacred to waste them upon such observances; which have in them, besides, something Pagan and Persic.⁹ To say truth, we never anticipated our usual hour, or got up with the sun (as 'tis called), to go a journey, or upon a foolish whole day's pleasuring, but we suffered for it all the long hours after in listlessness and headaches; Nature herself sufficiently declaring her sense of our presumption in aspiring to regulate our frail waking courses by the measures of that celestial and sleepless traveler. We deny not that there is something sprightly and vigorous, at the outset especially, in these break-of-day excursions. It is flattering to get the start of a lazy world; to conquer death by proxy in his image. But the seeds of sleep and mortality are in us; and we pay usually in strange qualms, before night falls, the penalty of the unnatural inversion.

⁶Time when the sun is farthest north of the equator and seems to stand still in its course.

⁷Trifles.

⁸Receptions.

⁹Persian. The Persians formerly worshiped the sun.

Therefore, while the busy part of mankind are fast huddling on their clothes, are already up and about their occupations, content to have swallowed their sleep by wholesale; we choose to linger a-bed, and digest our dreams. It is the very time to recombine the wandering images, which night in a confused mass presented; to snatch them from forgetfulness; to shape, and mold them. Some people have no good of their dreams. Like fast feeders, they gulp them too grossly to taste them curiously. We love to chew the cud of a foregone vision; to collect the scattered rays of a brighter phantasm, or act over again, with firmer nerves, the sadder nocturnal tragedies; to drag into day-light a struggling and half-vanishing nightmare; to handle and examine the terrors, or the airy solaces. We have too much respect for these spiritual communications to let them go so lightly. We are not so stupid, or so careless, as that Imperial forgetter of his dreams,¹ that we should need a seer to remind us of the form of them. They seem to us to have as much significance as our waking concerns; or rather to import us more nearly, as more nearly we approach by years to the shadowy world, whither we are hastening. We have shaken hands with the world's business; we have done with it; we have discharged ourself of it. Why should we get up? we have neither suit to solicit, nor affairs to manage. The drama has shut in upon us at the fourth act. We have nothing here to expect, but in a short time a sick-bed, and a dismissal. We delight to anticipate death by such shadows as night affords. We are already half acquainted with ghosts. We were never much in the world. Disappointment early struck a dark veil between us and its dazzling illusions. Our spirits showed gray before our hairs. The mighty changes of the world already appear as but the vain stuff out of which dramas are composed. We have asked no more of life than what the mimic images in play-houses present us with. Even those types have waxed fainter. Our clock appears to have struck. We are SUPERANNUATED. In this dearth of mundane satisfaction, we contract politic alliances with shadows. It is good to have friends at court. The abstracted media of

dreams seem no ill introduction to that spiritual presence, upon which, in no long time, we expect to be thrown. We are trying to know a little of the usages of that colony; to learn the language, and the faces we shall meet with there, that we may be the less awkward at our first coming among them. We willingly call a phantom our fellow, as knowing we shall soon be of their dark companionship. Therefore, we cherish dreams. We try to spell in them the alphabet of the invisible world; and think we know already, how it shall be with us. Those uncouth shapes, which, while we clung to flesh and blood, affrighted us, have become familiar. We feel attenuated into their meager essences, and have given the hand of half-way approach to incorporeal being. We once thought life to be something; but it has unaccountably fallen from us before its time. Therefore we choose to dally with visions. The sun has no purposes of ours to light us to. Why should we get up?

XV

THAT WE SHOULD LIE DOWN WITH THE LAMB

We could never quite understand the philosophy of this arrangement, or the wisdom of our ancestors in sending us for instruction to these woolly bedfellows. A sheep, when it is dark, has nothing to do but to shut his silly eyes, and sleep if he can. Man found out long sixes.²—Hail candle-light! without disparagement to sun or moon, the kindest luminary of the three—if we may not rather style thee their radiant deputy, mild viceroy of the moon!—We love to read, talk, sit silent, eat, drink, sleep, by candle-light. They are everybody's sun and moon. This is our peculiar and household planet. Wanting it, what savage unsocial nights must our ancestors have spent, wintering in caves and unilluminated fastnesses! They must have lain about and grumbled at one another in the dark. What repartees could have passed, when you must have felt about for a smile, and handled a neighbor's cheek to be sure that he understood it? This accounts for the seriousness of the elder poetry. It has a somber cast (try Hesiod or

¹Nebuchadnezzar. See Daniel, ii.

²Candles about eight inches in length, weighing six to the pound.

Ossian), derived from the tradition of those unlanterned nights. Jokes came in with candles. We wonder how they saw to pick up a pin, if they had any. How did they sup? what a melange¹ of chance carving they must have made of it!—here one had got the leg of a goat, when he wanted a horse's shoulder—there another had dipped his scooped palm in a kid-skin of wild honey, when he meditated right² mare's milk. There is neither good eating nor drinking in fresco.³ Who, even in these civilized times, has never experienced this, when at some economic table he has commenced dining after dusk, and waited for the flavor till the lights came? The senses absolutely give and take reciprocally. Can you tell pork from veal in the dark? or distinguish Sherris from pure Malaga?⁴ Take away the candle from the smoking man; by the glimmering of the left ashes, he knows that he is still smoking, but he knows it only by an inference; till the restored light, coming in aid of the olfactories, reveals to both senses the full aroma. Then how he redoubles his puffs! how he burnishes!—There is absolutely no such thing as reading, but by a candle. We have tried the affectation of a book at noon-day in gardens, and in sultry arbors; but it was labor thrown away. Those gay motes in the beam come about you, hovering and teasing, like many coquettes, that will have you all to their self, and are jealous of your abstractions. By the midnight taper, the writer digests his meditations. By the same light, we must approach to their pe-

rusal, if we would catch the flame, the odor. It is a mockery, all that is reported of the influential Phœbus. No true poem ever owed its birth to the sun's light. They are abstracted works—

Things that were born, when none but the sti-
night,
And his dumb candle, saw his pinching throes.⁵

Marry, daylight—daylight might furnish the images, the crude material; but for the fine shapings, the true turning and filing (as mine author⁶ hath it), they must be content to hold their inspiration of the candle. The mild internal light, that reveals them, like fires on the domestic hearth, goes out in the sunshine. Night and silence call out the starry fancies. Milton's Morning Hymn in Paradise,⁷ we would hold a good wager was penned at midnight, and Taylor's⁸ rich description of a sunrise smells decidedly of the taper. Even ourselves, in these our humbler lucubrations, tune our best measured cadences (Prose has her cadences) not unfrequently to the charm of the drowsier watchman, "blessing the doors"; or the wild sweeps of wind at midnight. Even now a loftier speculation than we have yet attempted, courts our endeavors. We would indite something about the Solar System.—*Betty, bring the candles.*

⁵Ben Jonson, *Poetaster*, "Apologetical Dialogue," 199–200.

⁶Ben Jonson, *To the Memory of my Beloved Master William Shakespeare*, 65–68.

⁷*Paradise Lost*, V, 153, and following lines.

⁸Jeremy Taylor (1613–1667), *Holy Dying*, Ch. I. S. iii, § 2.

¹Mixture. ²Real. ³Darkness. ⁴Wines.

GEORGE NOEL GORDON, LORD BYRON (1788-1824)

One with Byron's ancestry could scarcely have escaped a passionate temperament and a turbulent life, and Byron had both. His father, John Byron, was a "dazzlingly handsome and very dissipated guardsman" who came of a family many members of which had led wild lives. In his younger days he had eloped with and later married the Marchioness of Carmarthen, and on her death, shortly after the birth of their daughter Augusta, he had returned to England, badly in debt and avowedly on the lookout for a "Golden Dolly," to use Byron's phrase. He found her in the person of Catherine Gordon of Gight, whom he married in 1784 and then impoverished in the course of paying off his accumulated debts. She was a Scotch girl, not without intelligence, but provincial, capricious, and violent-tempered. "She is very amiable at a distance," her husband later wrote to his sister, "but I defy you and all the Apostles to live with her two months, for if anybody could live with her, it was me." To such parents Byron was born, in London, on 22 January, 1788. A little over three years later his father died in France, at the age of thirty-six, and Byron was left to be brought up solely by his mother. The two lived in Aberdeen until Byron was ten years old, the boy getting the beginnings of an education there, suffering from the ministrations of a shockingly bad nurse, and witnessing many a scene of violence caused by his mother's temper. In 1798 he became Lord Byron, on the death of his grand-uncle at Newstead Abbey. He immediately became worried because he could discern no change in his appearance now that he was a lord, and he long remained too conscious of and too proud of his title. The estate which came to him with his peerage was in bad condition and, though it yielded much more money than his mother had had even before her marriage, Byron was seldom free from financial difficulties, which were sometimes acute.

In the summer of 1798 Byron and his mother traveled south to Nottingham, and there and in the following year at London ineffectual efforts were made to cure the boy of the lameness with which he had been born. Byron, one is tempted to say, made the most of this lameness. Probably at times his pride did suffer from it, but he never let others forget it, and he apparently grew conscious that it added to the romantic interest of his otherwise strikingly handsome figure. From 1801 to 1805 Byron was at Harrow, whence he proceeded to Trinity College, Cambridge. There his career was, if not spectacular on a large scale, at least not without excitements and the beginnings of dissipation, love, and poetry. A volume of his poems (*Fugitive Pieces*) was privately printed in 1806, but all save two copies were destroyed by the author because one of the poems was harshly criticized for its viciousness. *Hours of Idleness* was published in 1807, and was seized on for castigation by the *Edinburgh Review*. This review is chiefly notable because it aroused Byron's anger and led him to retaliate in an effective and immediately successful satire, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809). Meanwhile Byron had left Cambridge in the summer of 1808 with an M. A. and had taken up residence at Newstead Abbey, which became the scene of events doubtless wild enough, though probably not so wild as rumor, and on occasion Byron himself, intimated. In the spring of 1809 he took his seat in the House of Lords, and later in the same year he left England for his Albanian tour, which lasted until 1811. On 3 May, 1810, he swam the Hellespont in one hour and ten minutes, an event which he is said never afterwards to have allowed his friends to forget.

In 1812, the year after his return to England, Byron published the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and immediately found himself famous. Romantic interest in both the man and his poem became intense, and Byron was the social sensation of London. Sir Walter Scott had been finding the English public ready for the romantic tale in verse, and Byron now proceeded to outdo Scott—or at least for the time being to make him seem tame and spiritless by comparison—in what he had made his own field. With a rapid succession of exciting oriental tales (*The Giaour*, 1813; *The Bride of Abydos*, 1813; *The Corsair*, 1814; *Lara*, 1814) he kept up or even increased the interest which *Childe Harold* had aroused. He was beginning to achieve a more than British, a European renown when, at the height of his dazzling fame, he married Miss Anna Isabella Milbanke in January, 1815. In the following December a child, Augusta Ada, was born, and a little over a month afterwards Lady Byron left her husband, never to return. The marriage had proved a miserable failure. It is doubtful if any woman could have retained Byron's wholehearted allegiance for long; certainly at any rate none did. He could not do without women nor with them, and in this he was at least true to the attitude he took towards the whole life of the world in which he found himself. Moreover, Lady Byron's nature was of an unlikely sort to touch his feelings, while he was almost from the first extraordinarily brutal in his behavior towards her. She had, indeed, from many of his actions, come to doubt his sanity. Immediately after the separation ugly rumors about its crowning cause began to spread through society, and Byron suddenly found himself ostracized and reviled by the world—a world, he felt, at least no better than he was—which had

recently paid lavish homage to him as its brightest star. Towards the end of April, 1816, he left England, to spend the remainder of his life on the Continent.

Byron went first to Geneva, where he spent some months and met Shelley for the first time. Each made a great impression on the other, and their intercourse then, and later in Italy, was important for both of them. During this summer Byron took up *Childe Harold* again, and wrote the third canto. He also wrote *The Prisoner of Chillon* at this time and began *Manfred*. In the fall of 1816 he went down into Italy and settled at Venice. There he finished *Manfred*, wrote *The Lament of Tasso* (both 1817), *Beppo*, and the fourth canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (both 1818). In 1819 he moved to Ravenna in order to be near the Countess Guiccioli, a young Italian girl with an aged husband. The latter at times gave Byron uncomfortable moments, but in the end proved dangerous to his pocketbook rather than to his person. In the same year the opening cantos of *Don Juan*, Byron's greatest poem, were published, further portions of which continued to appear until 1824. In following years Byron wrote a number of dramatic poems—*Cain*, *Sardanapalus*, and *The Two Foscari* were published in 1821—and his satire, *The Vision of Judgment* (1822). At the same time he was getting restless in Italy. He had been interested in the cause of Italian freedom, but his interest now began to ebb with the failure of some enterprises which he had tried to assist, and his interest in the Guiccioli was also ebbing. He had some thoughts of going to "Bolivar's country," but finally decided to aid the Greeks in their fight against the Turks for independence. He sailed from Genoa in July, 1823, and proceeded to devote both his time and his money to the Greek cause, despite discouragement, hardships, and increasing illness. Finally he succumbed to a fever at Missolonghi, and died there on 19 April, 1824. Nothing, it has been said, so well became his life as the manner of its ending, and the man died, as he had lived and written, in a way that stirred the feeling and fired the imagination of Europe.

Byron in a sense courted rivalry with Napoleon in the romantic age when giants walked the earth, and he holds the stage securely still. Not pre-eminently a lyric poet in an age of great lyrics, he yet had a largeness and force which give weight to his disillusioned re-action from the European society and politics of his day, and keep alive the poems in which he voiced it. "You have so many 'divine' poems," exclaimed Byron to his publisher, "is it nothing to have written a *human* one?" And while other poets were among the clouds, or at least among the mountains, Byron kept his station in the world and wrote, in *Don Juan*, the great epic of modern life.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE¹

CANTO III

*Afin que cette application vous forçât de penser à autre chose; il n'y a en vérité de remède que celui-là et le temps.*²

Lettre du Roi de Prusse à D'Alembert, Sept. 7, 1776.

I

Is THY face like thy mother's, my fair child!

ADA! sole daughter of my house and heart?³

When last I saw thy young blue eyes they smiled,

And then we parted,—not as now we part,

¹The first two cantos of *Childe Harold* were published in 1812. They tell of the travels of a disillusioned young man through Portugal, Spain, Albania, and Greece—what he saw and what he felt. Byron did not at the time continue the poem, but took it up again after his final departure from England in the spring of 1816. Canto III was written in Switzerland in May and June, 1816, and was published the same year. Substantially the third and fourth cantos form a distinct poem. An external connection with the earlier cantos is maintained, but in the intervening years Byron had experienced much and suffered much, and in these later cantos he speaks almost without disguise in his own

But with a hope.—

Awaking with a start,

The waters heave around me; and on high

The winds lift up their voices: I depart,

Whither I know not, but the hour's gone
by,

When Albion's lessening shores could grieve
or glad mine eye.

2

Once more upon the waters! yet once
more!

And the waves bound beneath me as a
steed

That knows his rider. Welcome to thee
roar!

Swift be their guidance, wheresoe'er I
lead!

person. The present canto tells of Byron's journey through Belgium and up the Rhine into Switzerland, description being mingled with reflective passages inspired by the scenes through which he passed.

²So that this employment may force you to think of something else; there is in truth no remedy save that and time.

³Byron never saw his daughter after she was five weeks old.

Though the strained mast should quiver
as a reed,
And the rent canvas fluttering strew the
gale,
Still must I on; for I am as a weed,
Flung from the rock, on Ocean's foam to
sail
Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's
breath prevail.

3

In my youth's summer I did sing of One,¹
The wandering outlaw of his own dark
mind;
Again I seize the theme, then but begun,
And bear it with me, as the rushing wind
Bears the cloud onwards: in that Tale I
find
The furrows of long thought, and dried-up
tears,
Which, ebbing, leave a sterile track behind,
O'er which all heavily the journeying years
Plod the last sands of life,—where not a
flower appears.

4

Since my young days of passion—joy, or
pain,
Perchance my heart and harp have lost
a string,
And both may jar: it may be, that in vain
I would essay as I have sung to sing.
Yet, though a dreary strain, to this I
cling,
So that it wean me from the weary dream
Of selfish grief or gladness—so it fling
Forgetfulness around me—it shall seem
To me, though to none else, a not ungrateful
theme.

5

He, who grown aged in this world of woe,
In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of
life,
So that no wonder waits him; nor below
Can love or sorrow, fame, ambition, strife,
Cut to his heart again with the keen knife
Of silent, sharp endurance: he can tell
Why thought seeks refuge in lone caves,
yet rife
With airy images, and shapes which dwell
Still unimpaired, though old, in the soul's
haunted cell.

¹I.e., Childe Harold.

6

'Tis to create, and in creating live
A being more intense that we endow
With form our fancy, gaining as we give
The life we image, even as I do now.
What am I? Nothing: but not so art thou,
Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse
earth,
Invisible but gazing, as I glow
Mixed with thy spirit, blended with thy
birth,
And feeling still with thee in my crushed
feelings' dearth.

7

Yet must I think less wildly:—I *have*
thought
Too long and darkly, till my brain became,
In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,
A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame:
And thus, untaught in youth my heart
to tame,
My springs of life were poisoned. 'Tis
too late!
Yet am I changed; though still enough
the same
In strength to bear what time cannot
abate,
And feed on bitter fruits without accusing
Fate.

8

Something too much of this:—but now
'tis past,
And the spell closes with its silent seal.
Long absent HAROLD re-appears at last;
He of the breast which fain no more would
feel,
Wrung with the wounds which kill not,
but ne'er heal;
Yet Time, who changes all, had altered him
In soul and aspect as in age: years steal
Fire from the mind as vigor from the limb;
And life's enchanted cup but sparkles near
the brim.

9

His had been quaffed too quickly, and he
found
The dregs were wormwood; but he filled
again,
And from a purer fount, on holier ground,
And deemed its spring perpetual; but in
vain!

Still round him clung invisibly a chain
Which galled for ever, fettering though
unseen,
And heavy though it clanked not; worn
with pain,
Which pined although it spoke not, and
grew keen,
Entering with every step he took through
many a scene.

10

Secure in guarded coldness, he had mixed
Again in fancied safety with his kind,
And deemed his spirit now so firmly fixed
And sheathed with an invulnerable mind,
That, if no joy, no sorrow lurked behind;
And he, as one, might 'midst the many
stand
Unheeded, searching through the crowd to
find
Fit speculation; such as in strange land
He found in wonder-works of God and Na-
ture's hand.

11

But who can view the ripened rose, nor seek
To wear it? who can curiously behold
The smoothness and the sheen of beauty's
cheek,
Nor feel the heart can never all grow old?
Who can contemplate Fame through
clouds unfold
The star which rises o'er her steep, nor
climb?
Harold, once more within the vortex, rolled
On with the giddy circle, chasing Time,
Yet with a nobler aim than in his youth's
fond prime.

12

But soon he knew himself the most unfit
Of men to herd with Man; with whom he
held
Little in common; untaught to submit
His thoughts to others, though his soul
was quelled
In youth by his own thoughts; still un-
compelled,
He would not yield dominion of his mind
To spirits against whom his own rebelled;
Proud though in desolation; which could
find
A life within itself, to breathe without man-
kind.

13

Where rose the mountains, there to him
were friends,
Where rolled the ocean, thereon was his
home,
Where a blue sky, and glowing clime,
extends,
He had the passion and the power to
roam;
The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,
Were unto him companionship; they spake
A mutual language, clearer than the tome
Of his land's tongue, which he would oft
forsake
For Nature's pages glassed by sunbeams on
the lake.

14

Like the Chaldean, he could watch the
stars,
Till he had peopled them with beings
bright
As their own beams; and earth, and earth-
born jars,
And human frailties, were forgotten quite:
Could he have kept his spirit to that flight
He had been happy; but this clay will sink
Its spark immortal, envying it the light
To which it mounts, as if to break the link
That keeps us from yon heaven which woos
us to its brink.

15

But in Man's dwellings he became a thing
Restless and worn, and stern and wear-
some,
Drooped as a wild-born falcon with clipped
wing,
To whom the boundless air alone were
home:
Then came his fit again, which to o'er-
come,
As eagerly the barred-up bird will beat
His breast and beak against his wiry dom
Till the blood tinge his plumage, so the heat
Of his impeded soul would through his bosom
eat.

16

Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,
With nought of hope left, but with less
gloom,
The very knowledge that he lived in vain
That all was over on this side the tomb,

Had made Despair a smilingness assume,
Which, though 'twere wild,—as on the
plundered wreck
When mariners would madly meet their
doom
With draughts intemperate on the sinking
deck,—
Did yet inspire a cheer, which he forbore to
check.

17

Stop!—for thy tread is on an Empire's
dust!
An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchered be-
low!
Is the spot marked with no colossal bust?
Nor column trophied for triumphal show?
None; but the moral's truth tells simpler
so,
As the ground was before, thus let it be;—
How that red rain hath made the harvest
grow!
And is this all the world has gained by
thee,
Thou first and last of fields! king-making
Victory?

18

And Harold stands upon this place of
skulls,
The grave of France, the deadly Waterloo!
How in an hour the power which gave
annuls
Its gifts, transferring fame as fleeting too!
In "pride of place" here last the eagle¹
flew,
Then tore with bloody talon the rent
plain,
Pierced by the shaft of banded nations
through;
Ambition's life and labors all were vain;
He wears the shattered links of the world's
broken chain.

19

Fit retribution! Gaul may champ the bit
And foam in fetters;—but is Earth more
free?
Did nations combat to make *One* submit;
Or league to teach all kings true
sovereignty?

¹Napoleon. "*Pride of place* is a term of falconry, meaning the highest pitch of flight" (Byron's note).

What! shall reviving Thralldom again be
The patched-up idol of enlightened days?
Shall we, who struck the Lion down, shall
we
Pay the Wolf homage? proffering lowly
gaze
And servile knees to thrones? No; *prove*
before ye praise!

20

If not, o'er one fallen despot boast no
more!
In vain fair cheeks were furrowed with hot
tears
For Europe's flowers long rooted up be-
fore
The trampler of her vineyards; in vain
years
Of death, depopulation, bondage, fears,
Have all been borne, and broken by the
accord
Of roused-up millions; all that most en-
dears
Glory, is when the myrtle wreathes a
sword
Such as Harmodius² drew on Athens' tyrant
lord.

21

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and
brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and wher
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake
again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like
a rising knell!

22

Did ye not hear it?—No; 'twas but the
wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and
Pleasure meet

²Harmodius and Aristogiton, concealing their swords in branches of myrtle during a religious festival, slew Hipparchus, who with his brother Hippias tyrannically ruled Athens. After their death and the later banishment of Hippias the two were praised as martyred patriots.

To chase the glowing Hours with flying
feet—
But hark!—that heavy sound breaks in
once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! Arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening
roar!

23

Within a windowed niche of that high hall
Sat Brunswick's fated chieftain;¹ he did
hear
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear;
And when they smiled because he deemed
it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too
well
Which stretched his father on a bloody
bier,
And roused the vengeance blood alone
could quell;
He rushed into the field, and, foremost fighting,
fell.

24

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and
fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of
distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness;
And there were sudden partings, such as
press
The life from out young hearts, and choking
sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated; who could
guess
If ever more should meet those mutual
eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn
could rise!

25

And there was mounting in hot haste: the
steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering
car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous
speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;

¹Frederick William, Duke of Brunswick.

And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning
star;
While thronged the citizens with terror
dumb,
Or whispering, with white lips—"The foe!
they come! they come!"

26

And wild and high the "Cameron's gathering"² rose!
The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's
hills
Have heard, and heard, too, have her
Saxon foes:—
How in the noon of night that pibroch
thrills,
Savage and shrill! But with the breath
which fills
Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers
With the fierce native daring which instills
The stirring memory of a thousand years,
And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each
clansman's ears!

27

And Ardennes waves above them her green
leaves,
Dewy with nature's tear-drops as they
pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave,—alas!
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
Which now beneath them, but above shall
grow
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living valor, rolling on the foe
And burning with high hope shall molder
cold and low.

28

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal-sound of
strife,
The morn the marshaling in arms,—the
day

²The gathering-cry of the clan Cameron. The chief of the clan was called Lochiel because this was the name of his estate.

Battle's magnificently stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which
when rent
The earth is covered thick with other clay,
Which her own clay shall cover, heaped
and pent,
Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red
burial blent!

29

Their praise is hymned by loftier harps
than mine:
Yet one I would select from that proud
throng,
Partly because they blend me with his line,
And partly that I did his sire some wrong,
And partly that bright names will hallow
song;
And his was of the bravest, and when
showered
The death-bolts deadliest the thinned files
along,
Even where the thickest of war's tempest
lowered,
They reached no nobler breast than thine,
young gallant Howard!¹

30

There have been tears and breaking hearts
for thee,
And mine were nothing had I such to give;
But when I stood beneath the fresh green
tree,
Which living waves where thou didst cease
to live,
And saw around me the wide field revive
With fruits and fertile promise, and the
Spring
Came forth her work of gladness to con-
trive,
With all her reckless birds upon the wing,
I turned from all she brought to those she
could not bring.

31

I turned to thee, to thousands, of whom
each
And one as all a ghastly gap did make
In his own kind and kindred, whom to teach
Forgetfulness were mercy for their sake;

¹Major Frederick Howard, Byron's second cousin.
His father, the Earl of Carlisle, was Byron's guardian.
Byron had given a satirical sketch of him in *English
Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.

The Archangel's trump, not Glory's, must
awake
Those whom they thirst for; though the
sound of Fame
May for a moment soothe, it cannot slake
The fever of vain longing, and the name
So honored but assumes a stronger, bitterer
claim.

32

They mourn, but smile at length; and,
smiling,
The tree will wither long before it fall;
The hull drives on, though mast and sail
be torn;
The roof-tree sinks, but molders on the
hall
In massy hoariness; the ruined wall
Stands when its wind-worn battlements
are gone;
The bars survive the captive they enthrall;
The day drags through, though storms
keep out the sun;
And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly
live on:

33

Even as a broken mirror, which the glass
In every fragment multiplies; and makes
A thousand images of one that was,
The same, and still the more, the more it
breaks;
And thus the heart will do which not
forsakes,
Living in shattered guise; and still, and
cold,
And bloodless, with its sleepless sorrow
aches,
Yet withers on till all without is old,
Showing no visible sign, for such things
are untold.

34

There is a very life in our despair,
Vitality of poison,—a quick root
Which feeds these deadly branches; for it
were
As nothing did we die; but Life will suit
Itself to Sorrow's most detested fruit,
Like to the apples on the Dead Sea's shore,
All ashes to the taste: Did man compute
Existence by enjoyment, and count o'er
Such hours 'gainst years of life,—say, would
he name threescore?

35

The Psalmist numbered out the years of man:
 They are enough; and if thy tale be *true*,
 Thou, who didst grudge him even that
 fleeting span,
 More than enough, thou fatal Waterloo!
 Millions of tongues record thee, and
 anew
 Their children's lips shall echo them, and
 say—
 "Here, where the sword united nations
 drew,
 Our countrymen were warring on that
 day!"
 And this is much, and all which will not
 pass away.

36

There sunk the greatest, nor the worst of
 men,¹
 Whose spirit, antithetically mixed,
 One moment of the mightiest, and again
 On little objects with like firmness fixed;
 Extreme in all things! hadst thou been
 betwixt,
 Thy throne had still been thine, or never
 been;
 For daring made thy rise as fall: thou
 seek'st
 Even now to re-assume the imperial mien,
 And shake again the world, the Thunderer
 of the scene!

37

Conqueror and captive of the earth art
 thou!
 She trembles at thee still, and thy wild
 name
 Was ne'er more bruited in men's minds
 than now
 That thou art nothing, save the jest of
 Fame,
 Who wooed thee once, thy vassal, and
 became
 The flatterer of thy fierceness, till thou
 wert
 A god unto thyself; nor less the same
 To the astounded kingdoms all inert,
 Who deemed thee for a time whate'er thou
 didst assert.

¹Napoleon.

38

Oh, more or less than man—in high or
 low,
 Battling with nations, flying from the
 field;
 Now making monarchs' necks thy foot-
 stool, now
 More than thy meanest soldier taught to
 yield;
 An empire thou couldst crush, command,
 rebuild,
 But govern not thy pettiest passion, nor,
 However deeply in men's spirits skilled,
 Look through thine own, nor curb the lust
 of war,
 Nor learn that tempted Fate will leave the
 loftiest star.

39

Yet well thy soul hath brooked the turning
 tide
 With that untaught innate philosophy,
 Which, be it wisdom, coldness, or deep
 pride,
 Is gall and wormwood to an enemy.
 When the whole host of hatred stood hard
 by,
 To watch and mock thee shrinking, thou
 hast smiled
 With a sedate and all-enduring eye;—
 When Fortune fled her spoiled and favorite
 child,
 He stood unbowed beneath the ills upon him
 piled.

40

Sager than in thy fortunes; for in them
 Ambition steeled thee on too far to show
 That just habitual scorn, which could
 condemn
 Men and their thoughts; 'twas wise to feel,
 not so
 To wear it ever on thy lip and brow,
 And spurn the instruments thou wert to
 use
 Till they were turned unto thine over-
 throw:
 'Tis but a worthless world to win or
 lose;
 So hath it proved to thee, and all such lot
 who choose.

41

If, like a tower upon a headland rock,
Thou hadst been made to stand or fall
alone,
Such scorn of man had helped to brave the
shock;
But men's thoughts were the steps which
paved thy throne,
Their admiration thy best weapon shone;
The part of Philip's son¹ was thine, not
then
(Unless aside thy purple had been thrown)
Like stern Diogenes to mock at men;
For sceptered cynics earth were far too wide
a den.

42

But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell,
And *there* hath been thy bane; there is a fire
And motion of the soul which will not
dwell
In its own narrow being, but aspire
Beyond the fitting medium of desire;
And, but once kindled, quenchless ever-
more,
Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire
Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,
Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever bore.

43

This makes the madmen who have made
men mad
By their contagion; Conquerors and
Kings,
Founders of sects and systems, to whom add
Sophists, Bards, Statesmen, all unquiet
things
Which stir too strongly the soul's secret
springs,
And are themselves the fools to those they
fool;
Envid, yet how unenviable! what stings
Are theirs! One breast laid open were a
school
Which would unteach mankind the lust to
shine or rule:

44

Their breath is agitation, and their life
A storm whereon they ride, to sink at last,
And yet so nursed and bigoted to strife,
That should their days, surviving perils
past,

¹Alexander the Great.

Melt to calm twilight, they feel overcast
With sorrow and supineness, and so die;
Even as a flame unfed, which runs to
waste
With its own flickering, or a sword laid
by,
Which eats into itself, and rusts ingloriously.

45

He who ascends to mountain-tops, shall
find
The loftiest peaks most wrapped in clouds
and snow;
He who surpasses or subdues mankind,
Must look down on the hate of those
below.
Though high *above* the sun of glory glow,
And far *beneath* the earth and ocean spread,
Round him are icy rocks, and loudly blow
Contending tempests on his naked head,
And thus reward the toils which to those
summits led.

46

Away with these! true Wisdom's world
will be
Within its own creation, or in thine,
Maternal Nature! for who teems like thee,
Thus on the banks of thy majestic Rhine?
There Harold gazes on a work divine,
A blending of all beauties; streams and dells,
Fruit, foliage, crag, wood, cornfield, moun-
tain, vine,
And chiefless castles breathing stern fare-
wells
From gray but leafy walls, where Ruin
greenly dwells.

47

And there they stand, as stands a lofty
mind,
Worn, but unstooping to the baser crowd,
All tenantless, save to the crannying wind,
Or holding dark communion with the
crowd.
There was a day when they were young
and proud;
Banners on high, and battles passed below;
But they who fought are in a bloody
shroud,
And those which waved are shredless dust
ere now,
And the bleak battlements shall bear no
future blow.

48

Beneath those battlements, within those
walls,
Power dwelt amidst her passions; in proud
state
Each robber chief upheld his arméd halls,
Doing his evil will, nor less elate
Than mightier heroes of a longer date.
What want these outlaws conquerors
should have
But history's purchased page to call them
great?
A wider space, an ornamented grave?
Their hopes were not less warm, their souls
were full as brave.

49

In their baronial feuds and single fields,
What deeds of prowess unrecorded died!
And Love, which lent a blazon to their
shields,
With emblems well devised by amorous
pride,
Through all the mail of iron hearts would
glide;
But still their flame was fierceness, and
drew on
Keen contest and destruction near allied,
And many a tower for some fair mischief
won,
Saw the discolored Rhine beneath its ruin
run.

50

But Thou, exulting and abounding river!
Making thy waves a blessing as they
flow
Through banks whose beauty would en-
dure for ever
Could man but leave thy bright creation
so,
Nor its fair promise from the surface
mow
With the sharp scythe of conflict,—then
to see
Thy valley of sweet waters, were to know
Earth paved like Heaven; and to seem
such to me,
Even now what wants thy stream?—that it
should Lethe¹ be.

¹The river of forgetfulness. Were it Lethe Byron could drink of it and forget the past, his own included.

51

A thousand battles have assailed thy
banks,
But these and half their fame have passed
away,
And Slaughter heaped on high his welter-
ing ranks;
Their very graves are gone, and what are
they?
Thy tide washed down the blood of yester-
day,
And all was stainless, and on thy clear
stream
Glassed, with its dancing light, the sunny
ray;
But o'er the blackened memory's blighting
dream
Thy waves would vainly roll, all sweeping
as they seem.

52

Thus Harold inly said, and passed along,
Yet not insensible to all which here
Awoke the jocund birds to early song
In glens which might have made even exile
dear:
Though on his brow were graven lines
austere,
And tranquil sternness, which had ta'en
the place
Of feelings fierier far but less severe,
Joy was not always absent from his face,
But o'er it in such scenes would steal with
transient trace.

53

Nor was all love shut from him, though
his days
Of passion had consumed themselves to
dust.
It is in vain that we would coldly gaze
On such as smile upon us; the heart must
Leap kindly back to kindness, though dis-
gust
Hath weaned it from all worldings: thus
he felt,
For there was soft remembrance, and
sweet trust
In one fond breast,² to which his own
would melt,
And in its tenderer hour on that his bosom
dwelt.

²In that of Byron's half-sister Augusta.

54

And he had learned to love,—I know not why,
For this in such as him seems strange of mood,—
The helpless looks of blooming infancy,
Even in its earliest nurture; what subdued,
To change like this, a mind so far imbued
With scorn of man, it little boots to know;
But thus it was; and though in solitude
Small power the nipped affections have to grow,
In him this glowed when all beside had ceased to glow.

55

And there was one soft breast, as hath been said,
Which unto his was bound by stronger ties
Than the church links withal; and, though unwed,
That love was pure, and, far above disguise,
Had stood the test of mortal enmities
Still undivided, and cemented more
By peril, dreaded most in female eyes;
But this was firm, and from a foreign shore
Well to that heart might his these absent greetings pour!

I

The castled crag of Drachenfels¹
Frowns o'er the wide and winding Rhine,
Whose breast of waters broadly swells
Between the banks which bear the vine,
And hills all rich with blossomed trees,
And fields which promise corn and wine,
And scattered cities crowning these,
Whose far white walls along them shine,
Have strewed a scene, which I should see
With double joy wert *thou* with me.

II

And peasant girls, with deep blue eyes,
And hands which offer early flowers,
Walk smiling o'er this paradise;
Above, the frequent feudal towers
Through green leaves lift their walls of gray;
And many a rock which steeply lowers,
And noble arch in proud decay,
Look o'er this vale of vintage-bowers;

¹Dragon Rock. One of the Siebengebirge (Seven Mountains) on the right bank of the Rhine between Remagen and Bonn.

But one thing want these banks of Rhine,—
Thy gentle hand to clasp in mine!

III

I send the lilies given to me;
Though long before thy hand they touch,
I know that they must withered be,
But yet reject them not as such;
For I have cherished them as dear,
Because they yet may meet thine eye,
And guide thy soul to mine even here,
When thou behold'st them drooping nigh,
And know'st them gathered by the Rhine,
And offered from my heart to thine!

IV

The river nobly foams and flows,
The charm of this enchanted ground,
And all its thousand turns disclose
Some fresher beauty varying round:
The haughtiest breast its wish might bound
Through life to dwell delighted here;
Nor could on earth a spot be found
To nature and to me so dear,
Could thy dear eyes in following mine
Still sweeten more these banks of Rhine!

56

By Coblentz, on a rise of gentle ground,
There is a small and simple pyramid,
Crowning the summit of the verdant mound;
Beneath its base are heroes' ashes hid,
Our enemy's—but let not that forbid
Honor to Marceau!² o'er whose early tomb
Tears, big tears, gushed from the rough soldier's lid,
Lamenting and yet envying such a doom,
Falling for France, whose rights he battled to resume.

57

Brief, brave, and glorious was his young career,—
His mourners were two hosts, his friends and foes;
And fitly may the stranger lingering here
Pray for his gallant spirit's bright repose;

²Soldier of revolutionary France who fell in battle in 1796, at the age of twenty-seven.

For he was Freedom's champion, one of those,
The few in number, who had not o'er-stepped
The charter to chastise which she bestows
On such as wield her weapons; he had kept
The whiteness of his soul, and thus men o'er him wept.

58

Here Ehrenbreitstein,¹ with her shattered wall
Black with the miner's blast, upon her height
Yet shows of what she was, when shell and ball
Rebounding idly on her strength did light:
A tower of victory! from whence the flight
Of baffled foes was watched along the plain:
But Peace destroyed what War could never blight,
And laid those proud roofs bare to Summer's rain—
On which the iron shower for years had poured in vain.

59

Adieu to thee, fair Rhine! How long delighted
The stranger fain would linger on his way!
Thine is a scene alike where souls united
Or lonely Contemplation thus might stray;
And could the ceaseless vultures cease to prey
On self-condemning bosoms, it were here,
Where Nature, nor too somber nor too gay,
Wild but not rude, awful yet not austere,
Is to the mellow Earth as Autumn to the year.

60

Adieu to thee again! a vain adieu!
There can be no farewell to scene like thine;
The mind is colored by thy every hue;
And if reluctantly the eyes resign
Their cherished gaze upon thee, lovely Rhine!
'Tis with the thankful heart of parting praise;

¹A fortress on the Rhine opposite the mouth of the Moselle. The French captured it in 1799 and later destroyed it.

More mighty spots may rise, more glaring shine,
But none unite in one attaching maze
The brilliant, fair, and soft,—the glories of old days.

61

The negligently grand, the fruitful bloom
Of coming ripeness, the white city's sheen,
The rolling stream, the precipice's gloom,
The forest's growth, and Gothic walls between,
The wild rocks shaped as they had turrets been,
In mockery of man's art; and these withal
A race of faces happy as the scene,
Whose fertile bounties here extend to all,
Still springing o'er thy banks, though Empires near them fall.

62

But these recede. Above me are the Alps,
The palaces of Nature, whose vast walls
Have pinnacles in clouds their snowy scalps,
And throned Eternity in icy halls
Of cold sublimity, where forms and falls
The avalanche—the thunderbolt of snow!
All that expands the spirit, yet appalls,
Gather around these summits, as to show
How Earth may pierce to Heaven, yet leave vain man below.

63

But ere these matchless heights I dare to scan,
There is a spot should not be passed in vain,—
Morat!² the proud, the patriot field! where man
May gaze on ghastly trophies of the slain,
Nor blush for those who conquered on that plain;
Here Burgundy bequeathed his tombless host,
A bony heap, through ages to remain,
Themselves their monument;—the Stygian coast
Unsepulchered they roamed, and shrieked each wandering ghost.

²Name of a town and lake east of Neuchâtel: the scene of a Swiss victory over Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, in 1476.

64

While Waterloo with Cannæ's¹ carnage
vies,
Morat and Marathon twin names shall
stand;
They were true Glory's stainless victories,
Won by the unambitious heart and hand
Of a proud, brotherly, and civic band,
All unbought champions in no princely
cause
Of vice-entailed Corruption; they no land
Doomed to bewail the blasphemy of laws
Making kings' rights divine, by some
Draconic² clause.

65

By a lone wall a lonelier column rears
A gray and grief-worn aspect of old days;
'Tis the last remnant of the wreck of years,
And looks as with the wild-bewildered
gaze
Of one to stone converted by amaze,
Yet still with consciousness; and there it
stands
• Making a marvel that it not decays,
When the coeval pride of human hands,
Leveled Adventicum,³ hath strewed her
subject lands.

66

And there—oh! sweet and sacred be the
name!—
Julia⁴—the daughter, the devoted—gave
Her youth to Heaven; her heart, beneath
a claim
Nearest to Heaven's, broke o'er a father's
grave.
Justice is sworn 'gainst tears, and hers
would crave
The life she lived in; but the judge was just,
And then she died on him she could not ave.
Their tomb was simple, and without a bust,
And held within their urn one mind, one
heart, one dust.

¹Scene of a Roman defeat by Hannibal in the Second Punic War.

²Draco was an Athenian, said to have been the first to draw up a code of laws. This code has become proverbial for its severity.

³Near Morat, capital of the Roman colony of Helvetia.

⁴Julia Alpinula, a young Aventian priestess, died soon after a vain endeavor to save her father, condemned to death as a traitor by Aulus Cæcina (Byron's note).

67

But these are deeds which should not pass
away,
And names that must not wither, though
the earth
Forgets her empires with a just decay,
The enslavers and the enslaved, their
death and birth;
The high, the mountain-majesty of worth
Should be, and shall, survivor of its woe,
And from its immortality look forth
In the sun's face, like yonder Alpine snow,
Imperishably pure beyond all things below.

68

Lake Lemán⁵ woos me with its crystal face,
The mirror where the stars and mountains
view
The stillness of their aspect in each trace
Its clear depth yields of their far height
and hue:
There is too much of man here, to look
through
With a fit mind the might which I behold;
But soon in me shall Loneliness renew
Thoughts hid, but not less cherished
than of old,
Ere mingling with the herd had penned me
in their fold.

69

To fly from, need not be to hate, mankind:
All are not fit with them to stir and toil,
Nor is it discontent to keep the mind
Deep in its fountain, lest it overboil
In the hot throng, where we become the
spoil
Of our infection, till too late and long
We may deplore and struggle with the coil,
In wretched interchange of wrong for
wrong
Midst a contentious world, striving where
none are strong.

70

There, in a moment we may plunge our
years
In fatal penitence, and in the blight
Of our own soul turn all our blood to
tears,
And color things to come with hues of
Night;

⁵The Lake of Geneva.

The race of life becomes a hopeless flight
To those that walk in darkness: on the sea
The boldest steer but where their ports
invite;

But there are wanderers o'er Eternity
Whose bark drives on and on, and anchored
ne'er shall be.

71

Is it not better, then, to be alone,
And love Earth only for its earthly sake?
By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone,
Or the pure bosom of its nursing lake,
Which feeds it as a mother who doth
make

A fair but froward infant her own care,
Kissing its cries away as these awake;—
Is it not better thus our lives to wear,
Than join the crushing crowd, doomed to
inflict or bear?

72

I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities torture: I can see
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,
Classed among creatures, when the soul
can flee,
And with the sky, the peak, the heaving
plain
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in
vain.

73

And thus I am absorbed, and this is life:
I look upon the peopled desert past,
As on a place of agony and strife,
Where, for some sin, to sorrow I was cast,
To act and suffer, but remount at last
With a fresh pinion; which I feel to spring,
Though young, yet waxing vigorous as the
blast
Which it would cope with, on delighted
wing,
Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round
our being cling.

74

And when, at length, the mind shall be all
free
From what it hates in this degraded form,
Reft of its carnal life, save what shall be
Existent happier in the fly and worm,—

When elements to elements conform,
And dust is as it should be, shall I not
Feel all I see, less dazzling, but more warm?
The bodiless thought? the Spirit of each
spot?

Of which, even now, I share at times the
immortal lot?

75

Are not the mountains, waves, and skies,
a part

Of me and of my soul, as I of them?
Is not the love of these deep in my heart
With a pure passion? should I not condemn
All objects, if compared with these? and
stem

A tide of suffering, rather than forgo
Such feelings for the hard and worldly
phlegm

Of those whose eyes are only turned below,
Gazing upon the ground, with thoughts
which dare not glow?

76

But this is not my theme; and I return
To that which is immediate, and require
Those who find contemplation in the urn,¹
To look on One,² whose dust was once all
fire,
A native of the land where I respire
The clear air for a while—a passing guest,
Where he became a being,—whose desire
Was to be glorious; 'twas a foolish quest,
The which to gain and keep, he sacrificed all
rest.

77

Here the self-torturing sophist, wild Rous-
seau,
The apostle of affliction, he who threw
Enchantment over passion, and from woe
Wrung overwhelming eloquence, first drew
The breath which made him wretched; yet
he knew
How to make madness beautiful, and cast
O'er erring deeds and thoughts a heavenly
hue
Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as they
passed
The eyes, which o'er them shed tears feel-
ingly and fast.

¹Which contains the ashes of the dead.

²Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). He was born
at Geneva and spent his earliest years there.

78

His love was passion's essence:—as a tree
On fire by lightning, with ethereal flame
Kindled he was, and blasted; for to be
Thus, and enamored, were in him the
same.

But his was not the love of living dame,
Nor of the dead who rise upon our dreams,
But of ideal beauty, which became
In him existence, and o'erflowing teems
Among his burning page, distempered though
it seems.

79

This breathed itself to life in Julie,¹ *this*
Invested her with all that's wild and sweet;
This hallowed, too, the memorable kiss
Which every morn his fevered lip would
greet,

From hers, who but with friendship his
would meet;²

But to that gentle touch through brain and
breast

Flashed the thrilled spirit's love-devouring
heat;

In that absorbing sigh perchance more
blest

Than vulgar minds may be with all they
seek possessed.

80

His life was one long war with self-sought
foes,

Or friends by him self-banished; for his
mind

Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary, and
chose,

For its own cruel sacrifice, the kind,
'Gainst whom he raged with fury strange
and blind.

But he was frensied, — wherefore, who
may know?

Since cause might be which skill could
never find;

But he was frensied by disease or woe,
To that worst pitch of all, which wears a
reasoning show.

¹Heroine of Rousseau's novel, *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse*.

²This refers to the account in his *Confessions* of his passion for the Comtesse d'Houdetot, and his long walk every morning, for the sake of the single kiss which was the common salutation of French acquaintance (Byron's note).

81

For then he was inspired, and from him
came,

As from the Pythian's mystic cave of yore,
Those oracles which set the world in
flame,

Nor ceased to burn till kingdoms were no
more:

Did he not this for France? which lay
before

Bowed to the inborn tyranny of years?
Broken and trembling to the yoke she
bore,

Till by the voice of him and his com-
peers

Roused up to too much wrath, which follows
o'ergrown fears?

82

They made themselves a fearful monu-
ment!

The wreck of old opinions—things which
grew,

Breathed from the birth of time: the veil
they rent,

And what behind 'it lay, all earth shall
view.

But good with ill they also overthrew,
Leaving but ruins, wherewith to rebuild
Upon the same foundation, and renew

Dungeons and thrones, which the same
hour refilled,

As heretofore, because ambition was self-
willed.

83

But this will not endure, nor be en-
dured!

Mankind have felt their strength, and
made it felt.

They might have used it better, but, al-
lured

By their new vigor, sternly have they
dealt

On one another; pity ceased to melt
With her once natural charities. But
they,

Who in oppression's darkness caved had
dwelt,

They were not eagles, nourished with the
day;

What marvel then, at times, if they mistook
their prey?

84

What deep wounds ever closed without a scar?
 The heart's bleed longest, and but heal to wear
 That which disfigures it; and they who war
 With their own hopes, and have been vanquished, bear
 Silence, but not submission: in his lair
 Fixed Passion holds his breath, until the hour
 Which shall atone for years; none need despair:
 It came, it cometh, and will come,—the power
 To punish or forgive—in *one* we shall be slower.

85

Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake,
 With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing
 Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake
 Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.
 This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
 To waft me from distraction; once I loved
 Torn ocean's roar, but thy soft murmuring
 Sounds sweet as if a Sister's voice re-proved,
 That I with stern delights should e'er have been so moved.

86

It is the hush of night, and all between
 Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,
 Mellowed and mingling, yet distinctly seen,
 Save darkened Jura, whose capped heights appear
 Precipitously steep; and drawing near,
 There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,
 Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear
 Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
 Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more.

87

He is an evening reveler, who makes
 His life an infancy, and sings his fill;
 At intervals, some bird from out the brakes
 Starts into voice a moment, then is still.

There seems a floating whisper on the hill,
 But that is fancy, for the starlight dews
 All silently their tears of love instill,
 Weeping themselves away, till they infuse
 Deep into Nature's breast the spirit of her hues.

88

Ye stars! which are the poetry of heaven!
 If in your bright leaves we would read the fate
 Of men and empires,—'tis to be forgiven,
 That in our aspirations to be great,
 Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
 And claim a kindred with you; for ye are
 A beauty and a mystery, and create
 In us such love and reverence from afar,
 That fortune, fame, power, life, have named
 themselves a star.

89

All heaven and earth are still—though not in sleep,
 But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;
 And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep:—
 All heaven and earth are still: From the high host
 Of stars, to the lulled lake and mountain-coast,
 All is concentrated in a life intense,
 Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,
 But hath a part of being, and a sense
 Of that which is of all Creator and defense.

90

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
 In solitude, where we are *least* alone;
 A truth, which through our being then doth melt,
 And purifies from self: it is a tone,
 The soul and source of music, which makes known
 Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm
 Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,¹
 Binding all things with beauty;—'twould disarm
 The specter Death, had he substantial power
 to harm.

¹Aphrodite's girdle, which attracted love to its wearer.

91

Not vainly did the early Persian make
 His altar the high places, and the peak
 Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus
 take
 A fit and unvalled temple, there to seek
 The Spirit, in whose honor shrines are
 weak,
 Upreared of human hands. Come, and
 compare
 Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or
 Greek,
 With Nature's realms of worship, earth
 and air,
 Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy
 pray'r!

92

The sky is changed!—and such a change!
 Oh night,
 And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous
 strong,
 Yet lovely in your strength, as is the
 light
 Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,
 From peak to peak, the rattling crags
 among
 Leaps the live thunder! Not from one
 lone cloud,
 But every mountain now hath found a
 tongue,
 And Jura answers, through her misty
 shroud,
 Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her
 aloud!

93

And this is in the night:—Most glorious
 night!
 Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me
 be
 A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,—
 A portion of the tempest and of thee!
 How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric
 sea,
 And the big rain comes dancing to the
 earth!
 And now again 'tis black,—and now, the
 glee
 Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-
 mirth,
 As if they did rejoice o'er a young earth-
 quake's birth.

94

Now, where the swift Rhone cleaves his
 way between
 Heights which appear as lovers who have
 parted
 In hate, whose mining depths so intervene
 That they can meet no more, though
 broken-hearted;
 Though in their souls, which thus each
 other thwarted,
 Love was the very root of the fond rage
 Which blighted their life's bloom, and
 then departed:
 Itself expired, but leaving them an age
 Of years all winters,—war within themselves
 to wage.

95

Now, where the quick Rhone thus hath
 cleft his way,
 The mightiest of the storms hath ta'en
 his stand:
 For here, not one, but many, make their
 play,
 And fling their thunder-bolts from hand to
 hand,
 Flashing and cast around; of all the
 band,
 The brightest through these parted hills
 hath forked
 His lightnings,—as if he did understand,
 That in such gaps as desolation worked,
 There the hot shaft should blast whatever
 therein lurked.

96

Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake, light-
 nings! ye!
 With night, and clouds, and thunder, and
 a soul
 To make these felt and feeling, well may
 be
 Things that have made me watchful; the
 far roll
 Of your departing voices, is the knoll¹
 Of what in me is sleepless,—if I rest.
 But where of ye, O tempests! is the
 goal?
 Are ye like those within the human breast?
 Or do ye find, at length, like eagles, some
 high nest?

¹Knell.

97

Could I embody and unbosom now
 That which is most within me,—could
 I weak
 My thoughts upon expression, and thus
 throw
 Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong
 or weak,
 All that I would have sought, and all I
 seek,
 Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe—into
one word,
 And that one word were Lightning, I
 would speak;
 But as it is, I live and die unheard,
 With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it
 as a sword.

98

The morn is up again, the dewy morn,
 With breath all incense, and with cheek all
 bloom,
 Laughing the clouds away with playful
 scorn,
 And living as if earth contained no tomb,—
 And glowing into day: we may resume
 The march of our existence: and thus I,
 Still on thy shores, fair Leman! may find
 room
 And food for meditation, nor pass by
 Much, that may give us pause, if pondered
 fittingly.

99

Clarens!¹ sweet Clarens, birthplace of deep
 Love!
 Thine air is the young breath of passionate
 thought;
 Thy trees take root in Love; the snows
 above
 The very Glaciers have his colors caught,
 And sun-set into rose-hues sees them
 wrought
 By rays which sleep there lovingly: the
 rocks,
 The permanent crags, tell here of Love,
 who sought
 In them a refuge from the worldly shocks,
 Which stir and sting the soul with hope that
 woos, then mocks.

¹Village on the Lake of Geneva, the scene of meetings
 of the lovers in Rousseau's *Julie*.

100

Clarens! by heavenly feet thy paths are
 trod,—
 Undying Love's, who here ascends a
 throne
 To which the steps are mountains; where
 the god
 Is a pervading life and light,—so shown
 Not on those summits solely, nor alone
 In the still cave and forest; o'er the
 flower
 His eye is sparkling, and his breath hath
 blown,
 His soft and summer breath, whose tender
 power
 Passes the strength of storms in their most
 desolate hour.

101

All things are here of *him*; from the black
 pines,
 Which are his shade on high, and the loud
 roar
 Of torrents, where he listeneth, to the
 vines
 Which slope his green path downward to
 the shore,
 Where the bowed waters meet him, and
 adore,
 Kissing his feet with murmurs; and the
 wood,
 The covert of old trees, with trunks all
 hoar,
 But light leaves, young as joy, stands
 where it stood,
 Offering to him, and his, a populous solitude.

102

A populous solitude of bees and birds
 And fairy-formed and many-colored things,
 Who worship him with notes more sweet
 than words,
 And innocently open their glad wings,
 Fearless and full of life: the gush of
 springs,
 And fall of lofty fountains, and the bend
 Of stirring branches, and the bud which
 brings
 The swiftest thought of beauty, here ex-
 tend,
 Mingling, and made by Love, unto one
 mighty end.

103

He who hath loved not, here would learn
that lore,
And make his heart a spirit; he who
knows
That tender mystery, will love the more;
For this is Love's recess, where vain men's
woes,
And the world's waste, have driven him far
from those,
For 'tis his nature to advance or die;
He stands not still, but or decays, or
grows
Into a boundless blessing, which may vie
With the immortal lights, in its eternity!

104

'Twas not for fiction chose Rousseau this
spot,
Peopling it with affections; but he found
It was the scene which Passion must allot
To the mind's purified beings; 'twas the
ground
Where early Love his Psyche's zone un-
bound,
And hallowed it with loveliness: 'tis lone,
And wonderful, and deep, and hath a
sound,
And sense, and sight of sweetness; here
the Rhone
Hath spread himself a couch, the Alps have
reared a throne.

105

Lausanne! and Ferney!¹ ye have been the
abodes
Of names which unto you bequeathed a
name;
Mortals, who sought and found, by dan-
gerous roads,
A path to perpetuity of fame:
They were gigantic minds, and their steep
aim
Was, Titan-like, on daring doubts to pile
Thoughts which should call down thunder,
and the flame
Of Heaven again assailed, if Heaven the
while
On man and man's research could deign do
more than smile.

¹In the former Gibbon had lived, in the latter Vol-
taire.

106

The one² was fire and fickleness, a child
Most mutable in wishes, but in mind
A wit as various,—gay, grave, sage, or
wild,—
Historian, bard, philosopher, combined;
He multiplied himself among mankind,
The Proteus of their talents: But his own
Breathed most in ridicule,—which, as the
wind,
Blew where it listed, laying all things
prone,—
Now to o'erthrow a fool, and now to shake
a throne.

107

The other, deep and slow, exhausting
thought,
And hiving wisdom with each studious
year,
In meditation dwelt, with learning
wrought,
And shaped his weapon with an edge
severe,
Sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer;
The lord of irony,—that master-spell,
Which stung his foes to wrath, which
grew from fear,
And doomed him to the zealot's ready Hell,
Which answers to all doubts so eloquently
well.

108

Yet, peace be with their ashes,—for by
them,
If merited, the penalty is paid;
It is not ours to judge,—far less condemn;
The hour must come when such things
shall be made
Known unto all, or hope and dread allayed
By slumber, on one pillow, in the dust,
Which, thus much we are sure, must lie de-
cayed,
And when it shall revive, as is our trust,
'Twill be to be forgiven, or suffer what is
just.

109

But let me quit man's works, again to read
His Maker's, spread around me, and sus-
pend
This page, which from my reveries I feed,
Until it seems prolonging without end.

²Voltaire.

The clouds above me to the white Alps
tend,
And I must pierce them, and survey what-
e'er
May be permitted, as my steps I bend
To their most great and growing region,
where
The earth to her embrace compels the powers
of air.

110

Italia! too, Italia! looking on thee,
Full flashes on the soul the light of ages,
Since the fierce Carthaginian almost won
thee,
To the last halo of the chiefs and sages
Who glorify thy consecrated pages;
Thou wert the throne and grave of em-
pires; still,
The fount at which the panting mind as-
suages
Her thirst of knowledge, quaffing there her
fill,
Flows from the eternal source of Rome's im-
perial hill.

111

Thus far have I proceeded in a theme
Renewed with no kind auspices:—to feel
We are not what we have been and to
deem
We are not what we should be, and to
steel
The heart against itself; and to conceal,
With a proud caution, love, or hate, or
aught,—
Passion or feeling, purpose, grief or zeal,—
Which is the tyrant spirit of our thought,
Is a stern task of soul:—No matter,—it is
taught.

112

And for these words, thus woven into song,
It may be that they are a harmless wile,—
The coloring of the scenes which fleet
along,
Which I would seize, in passing, to beguile
My breast, or that of others, for a while.
Fame is the thirst of youth, but I am not
So young as to regard men's frown or smile,
As loss or guerdon of a glorious lot;
I stood and stand alone,—remembered or
forgot.

113

I have not loved the world, nor the world
me;
I have not flattered its rank breath, nor
bowed
To its idolatries a patient knee,
Nor coined my cheek to smiles, nor cried
aloud
In worship of an echo; in the crowd
They could not deem me one of such; I
stood
Among them, but not of them; in a shroud
Of thoughts which were not their thoughts,
and still could,
Had I not filed¹ my mind, which thus itself
subdued.

114

I have not loved the world, nor the world
me,—
But let us part fair foes; I do believe,
Though I have found them not, that there
may be
Words which are things, hopes which will
not deceive,
And virtues which are merciful, nor weave
Snarers for the failing; I would also deem
O'er others' griefs that some sincerely
grieve;
That two, or one, are almost what they
seem,
That goodness is no name, and happiness no
dream.

115

My daughter! with thy name this song
begun;
My daughter! with thy name thus much
shall end;
I see thee not, I hear thee not, but none
Can be so wrapped in thee; thou art the
friend
To whom the shadows of far years extend:
Albeit my brow thou never shouldst be-
hold,
My voice shall with thy future visions
blend,
And reach into thy heart, when mine is
cold,
A token and a tone, even from thy father's
mold.

¹Filed.

116

To aid thy mind's development, to watch
Thy dawn of little joys, to sit and see
Almost thy very growth, to view thee
catch
Knowledge of objects,—wonders yet to
thee!
To hold thee lightly on a gentle knee,
And print on thy soft cheek a parent's
kiss,—
This, it should seem, was not reserved for
me;
Yet this was in my nature: as it is,
I know not what is there, yet something like
to this.

117

Yet, though dull Hate as duty should be
taught,
I know that thou wilt love me; though my
name
Should be shut from thee, as a spell still
fraught
With desolation, and a broken claim:
Though the grave closed between us,—
'twere the same,
I know that thou wilt love me; though to
drain
My blood from out thy being were an
aim,
And an attainment,—all would be in
vain,—
Still thou wouldst love me, still that more
than life retain.

118

The child of love, though born in bitter-
ness,
And nurtured in convulsion. Of thy sire
These were the elements, and thine no
less.
As yet such are around thee, but thy
fire
Shall be more tempered, and thy hope far
higher.
Sweet be thy cradled slumbers! O'er the
sea
And from the mountains where I now
respire,
Fain would I waft such blessing upon
thee,
As, with a sigh, I deem thou might'st have
been to me.

CANTO IV¹

78

Oh Rome! my country! city of the soul!
The orphans of the heart must turn to
thee,
Lone mother of dead empires! and control
In their shut breasts their petty misery.
What are our woes and sufferance? Come
and see
The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your
way
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples,
Ye!
Whose agonies are evils of a day—
A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

79

The Niobe² of nations! there she stands,
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless
woe;
An empty urn within her withered hands,
Whose holy dust was scattered long ago;
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now,
The very sepulchers lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou flow,
Old Tiber! through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her
distress.

80

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War,
Flood, and Fire,
Have dealt upon the seven-hilled city's
pride;
She saw her glories star by star expire,
And up the steep barbarian monarchs ride,
Where the car climbed the Capitol; far and
wide
Temple and tower went down, nor left a
site:
Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
And say, "here was, or is," where all is
doubly night?

¹Written in 1817, published in 1818. The omitted earlier portion of the canto deals with Venice, Arqua, Ferrara, Florence, Lake Thrasimene, the temple of Clitumnus, the waterfall of Terni, the Apennines, and Horace.

²Niobe boasted of her many children, and because of her pride they were all slain, while Niobe from grief turned into stone.

81

The double night of ages, and of her,
 Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrap-
 ped and wrap
 All round us: we but feel our way to err:
 The ocean hath its chart, the stars their
 map,
 And Knowledge spreads them on her
 ample lap;
 But Rome is as the desert, where we steer
 Stumbling o'er recollections; now we clap
 Our hands, and cry "Eureka!"¹ it is clear—
 When but some false mirage of ruin rises
 near.

82

Alas! the lofty city! and alas!
 The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day
 When Brutus² made the dagger's edge sur-
 pass
 The conqueror's sword in bearing fame
 away!
 Alas, for Tully's³ voice, and Virgil's lay,
 And Livy's pictured page!—but these
 shall be
 Her resurrection; all beside—decay.
 Alas, for Earth, for never shall we see
 That brightness in her eye she bore when
 Rome was free!

83

Oh thou, whose chariot rolled on Fortune's
 wheel,
 Triumphant Sylla!⁴ Thou, who didst sub-
 due
 Thy country's foes ere thou wouldst
 pause to feel
 The wrath of thy own wrongs, or reap the
 due
 Of hoarded vengeance till thine eagles flew
 O'er prostrate Asia;—thou, who with thy
 frown
 Annihilated senates—Roman, too,
 With all thy vices, for thou didst lay down
 With an atoning smile a more than earthly
 crown—

¹*I.e.*, I have found.

²By the assassination of Julius Cæsar.

³Cicero.

⁴More correctly Sulla. Roman dictator who was declared a public enemy while in Asia fighting Mithridates. On his return he defeated his enemies, regained his dictatorship, and then voluntarily resigned it.

84

The dictatorial wreath—couldst thou
 divine
 To what would one day dwindle that
 which made
 Thee more than mortal? and that so
 supine
 By aught than Romans Rome should thus
 be laid?
 She who was named Eternal, and arrayed
 Her warriors but to conquer—she who
 veiled
 Earth with her haughty shadow, and dis-
 played,
 Until the o'er-canopied horizon failed,
 Her rushing wings—Oh! she who was Al-
 mighty hailed!

85

Sylla was first of victors; but our own,
 The sagest of usurpers, Cromwell!—he
 Too swept off senates while he hewed the
 throne
 Down to a block—immortal rebel! See
 What crimes it costs to be a moment free,
 And famous through all ages! but beneath
 His fate the moral lurks of destiny;
 His day of double victory and death
 Beheld him win two realms, and, happier,
 yield his breath.

86

The third of the same moon whose former
 course
 Had all but crowned him, on the self-
 same day
 Deposed him gently from his throne of
 force,
 And laid him with the earth's preceding
 clay.
 And showed not Fortune thus how fame
 and sway,
 And all we deem delightful, and consume
 Our souls to compass through each ardu-
 ous way,
 Are in her eyes less happy than the tomb?
 Were they but so in man's, how different
 were his doom!

87

And thou, dread statue! yet existent in
 The austerest form of naked majesty,
 Thou who beheldest, 'mid the assassins' din,
 At thy bathed base the bloody Cæsar lie,

Folding his robe in dying dignity,
 An offering to thine altar from the queen
 Of gods and men, great Nemesis! did he
 die,
 And thou, too, perish, Pompey?¹ have ye
 been
 Victors of countless kings, or puppets of a
 scene?

88

And thou, the thunder-stricken nurse of
 Rome!
 She-wolf!² whose brazen-imaged dugs
 impart
 The milk of conquest yet within the dome
 Where, as a monument of antique art,
 Thou standest:—Mother of the mighty
 heart,
 Which the great founder sucked from thy
 wild teat,
 Scorched by the Roman Jove's ethereal
 dart,
 And thy limbs black with lightning—dost
 thou yet
 Guard thine immortal cubs, nor thy fond
 charge forget?

89

Thou dost; but all thy foster-babes are
 dead—
 The men of iron: and the world hath
 reared
 Cities from out their sepulchers: men bled
 In imitation of the things they feared,
 And fought and conquered, and the same
 course steered,
 At apish distance; but as yet none have,
 Nor could, the same supremacy have
 neared,
 Save one vain man,³ who is not in the
 grave,
 But, vanquished by himself, to his own
 slaves a slave—

90

The fool of false dominion—and a kind
 Of bastard Cæsar, following him of old
 With steps unequal; for the Roman's
 mind
 Was modeled in a less terrestrial mold,

¹Cæsar's unsuccessful opponent, at the foot of whose statue Cæsar was slain.

²Bronze statue of a she-wolf giving suck to Romulus and Remus, founders of Rome.

³Napoleon, at the time on St. Helena.

With passions fiercer, yet a judgment cold,
 And an immortal instinct which redeemed
 The frailties of a heart so soft, yet bold,
 Alcides with the distaff⁴ now he seemed
 At Cleopatra's feet,—and now himself he
 beamed,

91

And came—and saw—and conquered! But
 the man
 Who would have tamed his eagles down to
 flee,
 Like a trained falcon, in the Gallic van,
 Which he, in sooth, long led to victory,
 With a deaf heart which never seemed to be
 A listener to itself, was strangely framed;
 With but one weakest weakness—vanity,
 Coquettish in ambition, still he aimed—
 At what? can he avouch, or answer what he
 claimed?

92

And would be all or nothing—nor could
 wait
 For the sure grave to level him; few years
 Had fixed him with the Cæsars in his fate,
 On whom we tread: For *this* the conqueror
 rears
 The arch of triumph! and for this the tears
 And blood of earth flow on as they have
 flowed,
 An universal deluge, which appears
 Without an ark for wretched man's abode,
 And ebbs but to reflow! Renew thy rainbow,
 God!

93

What from this barren being do we reap?
 Our senses narrow, and our reason frail,
 Life short, and truth a gem which loves
 the deep,
 And all things weighed in custom's falsest
 scale;
 Opinion an omnipotence,—whose veil
 Mantles the earth with darkness, until
 right
 And wrong are accidents, and men grow
 pale
 Lest their own judgments should become
 too bright,
 And their free thoughts be crimes, and earth
 have too much light.

⁴Hercules sold himself as a slave to Omphale, queen of Lydia, and during his servitude dressed himself as a maiden and spun wool.

94

And thus they plod in sluggish misery,
 Rotting from sire to son, and age to
 age,
 Proud of their trampled nature, and so
 die,
 Bequeathing their hereditary rage
 To the new race of inborn slaves, who
 wage
 War for their chains, and rather than be
 free,
 Bleed gladiator-like, and still engage
 Within the same arena where they see
 Their fellows fall before, like leaves of the
 same tree.

95

I speak not of men's creeds—they rest
 between
 Man and his Maker—but of things al-
 lowed,
 Averred, and known, and daily, hourly
 seen—
 The yoke that is upon us doubly bowed,
 And the intent of tyranny avowed,
 The edict of Earth's rulers, who are grown
 The apes of him who humbled once the
 proud,
 And shook them from their slumbers on
 the throne:
 Too glorious, were this all his mighty arm
 had done.

96

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquered
 be,
 And Freedom find no champion and no
 child
 Such as Columbia saw arise when she
 Sprung forth a Pallas,¹ armed and unde-
 filed?
 Or must such minds be nourished in the
 wild,
 Deep in the unpruned forest, 'midst the
 roar
 Of cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled
 On infant Washington? Has Earth no
 more
 Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no
 such shore?

¹Athene, goddess of wisdom, sprang full-armed from the head of Zeus.

97

But France got drunk with blood to vomit
 crime,
 And fatal have her Saturnalia² been
 To Freedom's cause, in every age and
 clime;
 Because the deadly days which we have
 seen,
 And vile Ambition, that built up between
 Man and his hopes an adamant wall,
 And the base pageant last upon the scene,
 Are grown the pretext for the eternal
 thrall
 Which nips life's tree, and dooms man's
 worst—his second fall.

98

Yet, Freedom! yet thy banner, torn, but
 flying,
 Streams like the thunder-storm *against*
 the wind;
 Thy trumpet voice, though broken now
 and dying,
 The loudest still the tempest leaves be-
 hind;
 Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the
 rind,
 Chopped by the axe, looks rough and little
 worth,
 But the sap lasts,—and still the seed we
 find
 Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North;
 So shall a better spring less bitter fruit bring
 forth.

99

There is a stern round tower³ of other days,
 Firm as a fortress, with its fence of stone,
 Such as an army's baffled strength delays,
 Standing with half its battlements alone,
 And with two thousand years of ivy
 grown,
 The garland of eternity, where wave
 The green leaves over all by time o'er-
 thrown;—
 What was this tower of strength? within
 its cave
 What treasure lay so locked, so hid?—A
 woman's grave.

²The festival of Saturn at Rome was a time of extraordinary license.

³The tomb of Cæcilia Metella, wife of Crassus, the wealthiest of Romans.

100

But who was she, the lady of the dead,
Tombed in a palace? Was she chaste and
fair?
Worthy a king's, or more—a Roman's
bed?
What race of chiefs and heroes did she
bear?
What daughter of her beauties was the
heir?
How lived, how loved, how died she?
Was she not
So honored—and conspicuously there,
Where meaner relics must not dare to rot,
Placed to commemorate a more than mortal
lot?

101

Was she as those who love their lords, or
they
Who love the lords of others? such have
been
Even in the olden time, Rome's annals say.
Was she a matron of Cornelia's¹ mien,
Or the light air of Egypt's graceful queen,²
Profuse of joy—or 'gainst it did she war
Inveterate in virtue? Did she lean
To the soft side of the heart, or wisely bar
Love from amongst her griefs?—for such
the affections are.

102

Perchance she died in youth: it may be,
bowed
With woes far heavier than the ponderous
tomb
That weighed upon her gentle dust, a cloud
Might gather o'er her beauty, and a gloom
In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom
Heaven gives its favorites—early death;
yet shed
A sunset charm around her, and illume
With hectic light, the Hesperus of the dead,
Of her consuming cheek the autumnal leaf-
like red.

103

Perchance she died in age—surviving all,
Charms, kindred, children—with the sil-
ver gray
On her long tresses, which might yet recall,
It may be, still a something of the day

¹Mother of the Gracchi.

²Cleopatra.

When they were braided, and her proud
array
And lovely form were envied, praised, and
eyed
By Rome—But whither would Conjecture
stray?
Thus much alone we know—Metella died,
The wealthiest Roman's wife: Behold his
love or pride!

104

I know not why—but standing thus by
thee
It seems as if I had thine inmate known,
Thou Tomb! and other days come back
on me
With recollected music, though the tone
Is changed and solemn, like the cloudy
groan
Of dying thunder on the distant wind;
Yet could I seat me by this ivied stone
Till I had bodied forth the heated mind
Forms from the floating wreck which Ruin
leaves behind;

105

And from the planks, far shattered o'er
the rocks,
Built me a little bark of hope, once more
To battle with the ocean and the shocks
Of the loud breakers, and the ceaseless
roar
Which rushes on the solitary shore
Where all lies foundered that was ever
dear:
But could I gather from the wave-worn
store
Enough for my rude boat, where should
I steer?
There toos no home, no hope, nor life, save
what is here.

106

Then let the winds howl on! their har-
mony
Shall henceforth be my music, and the
night
The sound shall temper with the owlets'
cry,
As I now hear them, in the fading light

Dim o'er the bird of darkness' native site,
 Answering each other on the Palatine,¹
 With their large eyes, all glistening gray
 and bright,
 And sailing pinions.—Upon such a shrine
 What are our petty griefs?—let me not
 number mine.

107

Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower
 grown
 Matted and massed together, hillocks
 heaped
 On what were chambers, arch crushed,
 column strown
 In fragments, choked up vaults, and fres-
 cos steeped
 In subterranean damps, where the owl
 peeped,
 Deeming it midnight:—Temples, baths,
 or halls?
 Pronounce who can; for all that Learning
 reaped
 From her research hath been, that these
 are walls—
 Behold the Imperial Mount! 'tis thus the
 mighty falls,

108

There is the moral of all human tales;
 'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past,
 First Freedom, and then Glory—when
 that fails,
 Wealth, vice, corruption,—barbarism at
 last.
 And History, with all her volumes vast,
 Hath but *one* page,—'tis better written
 here
 Where gorgeous Tyranny hath thus
 amassed
 All treasures, all delights, that eye or ear,
 Heart, soul could seek, tongue ask—Away
 with words! draw near,

109

Admire, exult, despise, laugh, weep,—for
 here
 There is such matter for all feeling:—Man!
 Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and tear,
 Ages and realms are crowded in this span,

¹One of the hills on which Rome is built, containing
 ruins of the palace of the Cæsars.

This mountain, whose obliterated plan
 The pyramid of empires pinnaced,
 Of Glory's gewgaws shining in the van
 Till the sun's rays with added flame were
 filled!
 Where are its golden roofs? where those
 who dared to build?

110

Tully was not so eloquent as thou,
 Thou nameless column with the buried
 base!
 What are the laurels of the Cæsar's brow?
 Crown me with ivy from his dwelling-
 place.
 Whose arch or pillar meets me in the face,
 Titus or Trajan's? No—'tis that of
 Time:
 Triumph, arch, pillar, all he doth dis-
 place
 Scoffing; and apostolic statues climb
 To crush the imperial urn, whose ashes slept
 sublime,

111

Buried in air, the deep blue sky of Rome,
 And looking to the stars: they had con-
 tained
 A spirit which with these would find a
 home,
 The last of those who o'er the whole earth
 reigned,
 The Roman globe, for after none sustained
 But yielded back his conquests:—he was
 more
 Than a mere Alexander, and, unstained
 With household blood and wine, serenely
 wore
 His sovereign virtues—still we Trajan's
 name adore.

112

Where is the rock of Triumph,² the high
 place
 Where Rome embraced her heroes? where
 the steep
 Tarpeian?³ fittest goal of Treason's race,
 The promontory whence the Traitor's
 Leap

²The site of the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline
 Hill.

³A rock from which traitors were thrown.

Cured all ambition. Did the conquerors
 heap
 Their spoils here? Yes; and in yon field
 below,
 A thousand years of silenced factions
 sleep—
 The Forum, where the immortal accents
 glow,
 And still the eloquent air breathes—burns
 with Cicero!

113

The field of freedom, faction, fame, and
 blood:
 Here a proud people's passions were ex-
 haled,
 From the first hour of empire in the bud
 To that when further worlds to conquer
 failed;
 But long before had Freedom's face been
 veiled,
 And Anarchy assumed her attributes;
 Till every lawless soldier who assailed
 Trod on the trembling senate's slavish
 mutes,
 Or raised the venal voice of baser prostitutes.

114

Then turn we to her latest tribune's name,
 From her ten thousand tyrants turn to
 thee,
 Redeemer of dark centuries of shame—
 The friend of Petrarch—hope of Italy—
 Rienzi!¹ last of Romans! While the tree
 Of freedom's withered trunk puts forth
 a leaf
 Even for thy tomb a garland let it be—
 The forum's champion, and the people's
 chief—
 Her new-born Numa² thou—with reign,
 alas! too brief.

115

Egeria!³ sweet creation of some heart
 Which found no mortal resting-place so
 fair
 As thine ideal breast; whate'er thou art
 Or wert,—a young Aurora of the air,

¹Inspired by the ancient glories of Rome, he suc-
 ceeded in re-establishing the Roman Republic for a few
 months in 1347, and issued decrees as its Tribune.

²Roman law-giver.

³A nymph who instructed or inspired Numa when he
 visited her fountain at night.

The nympholepsy⁴ of some fond despair;
 Or, it might be, a beauty of the earth,
 Who found a more than common votary
 there
 Too much adoring; whatsoe'er thy birth,
 Thou wert a beautiful thought, and softly
 bodied forth.

116

The mosses of thy fountain still are
 sprinkled
 With thine Elysian water-drops; the face
 Of thy cave-guarded spring with years
 unwrinkled,
 Reflects the meek-eyed genius of the place,
 Whose green, wild margin now no more
 erase
 Art's works; nor must the delicate waters
 sleep,
 Prisoned in marble, bubbling from the
 base
 Of the cleft statue, with a gentle leap
 The rill runs o'er, and round fern, flowers,
 and ivy creep,

117

Fantastically tangled: the green hills
 Are clothed with early blossoms, through
 the grass
 The quick-eyed lizard rustles, and the bills
 Of summer-birds sing welcome as ye pass;
 Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their
 class,
 Implore the pausing step, and with their
 dyes,
 Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass;
 The sweetness of the violet's deep blue
 eyes,
 Kissed by the breath of heaven seems colored
 by its skies.

118

Here didst thou dwell, in this enchanted
 cover,
 Egeria! thy all heavenly bosom beating
 For the far footsteps of thy mortal lover;
 The purple Midnight veiled that mystic
 meeting
 With her most starry canopy, and seating
 Thyself by thine adorer, what befell?
 This cave was surely shaped out for the
 greeting
 Of an enamored Goddess, and the cell
 Haunted by holy Love—the earliest oracle!

⁴*I.e.*, madness.

119

And didst thou not, thy breast to his reply-
ing,
Blend a celestial with a human heart;
And Love, which dies as it was born, in
sighing,
Share with immortal transports? could
thine art
Make them indeed immortal, and impart
The purity of heaven to earthly joys,
Expel the venom and not blunt the dart—
The dull satiety which all destroys—
And root from out the soul the deadly weed
which cloy's?

120

Alas! our young affections run to waste,
Or water but the desert; whence arise
But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of
haste,
Rank at the core, though tempting to the
eyes,
Flowers whose wild odors breathe but
agonies,
And trees whose gums are poisons; such
the plants
Which spring beneath her steps as Passion
flies
O'er the world's wilderness, and vainly
pants
For some celestial fruit forbidden to our
wants.

121

Oh Love! no habitant of earth thou art—
An unseen seraph, we believe in thee,—
A faith whose martyrs are the broken
heart,—
But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall see
The naked eye, thy form, as it should be;
The mind hath made thee, as it peopled
heaven,
Even with its own desiring phantasy,
And to a thought such shape and image
given,
As haunts the unquenched soul—parched,
wearied, wrung, and riven.

122

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased,
And fevers into false creation:—where,
Where are the forms the sculptor's soul
hath seized?
In him alone. Can Nature show so fair?

Where are the charms and virtues which
we dare
Conceive in boyhood and pursue as men,
The unreached Paradise of our despair,
Which o'er-informs the pencil and the
pen,
And overpowers the page where it would
bloom again?

123

Who loves, raves—'tis youth's frenzy—
but the cure
Is bitterer still, as charm by charm un-
winds
Which robbed our idols, and we see too
sure
Nor worth nor beauty dwells from out the
mind's
Ideal shape of such; yet still it binds
The fatal spell, and still it draws us on,
Reaping the whirlwind from the oft-sown
winds;
The stubborn heart, its alchemy begun,
Seems ever near the prize—wealthiest when
most undone.

124

We wither from our youth, we gasp away—
Sick—sick; unfound the boon, unslaked
the thirst,
Though to the last, in verge of our decay,
Some phantom lures, such as we sought at
first—
But all too late,—so are we doubly cursed.
Love, fame, ambition, avarice—'tis the
same,
Each idle, and all ill, and none the worst—
For all are meteors with a different name,
And Death the sable smoke where vanishes
the flame.

125

Few—none—find what they love or could
have loved,
Though accident, blind contact, and the
strong
Necessity of loving, have removed
Antipathies—but to recur, ere long,
Envenomed with irrevocable wrong;
And Circumstance, that unspiritual god
And miscreator, makes and helps along
Our coming evils with a crutch-like rod,
Whose touch turns Hope to dust,—the dust
we all have trod.

126

Our life is a false nature: 'tis not in
 The harmony of things,—this hard de-
 cree,
 This uneradicable taint of sin,
 This boundless upas,¹ this all-blasting tree,
 Whose root is earth, whose leaves and
 branches be
 The skies which rain their plagues on men
 like dew—
 Disease, death, bondage—all the woes we
 see,
 And worse, the woes we see not—which
 throb through
 The immedicable soul, with heart-aches ever
 new.

127

Yet let us ponder boldly—'tis a base
 Abandonment of reason to resign
 Our right of thought—our last and only
 place
 Of refuge; this, at least, shall still be
 mine:
 Though from our birth the faculty di-
 vine
 Is chained and tortured—cabined, cribbed,
 confined,²
 And bred in darkness, lest the truth should
 shine
 Too brightly on the unprepared mind,
 The beam pours in, for time and skill will
 couch the blind.

128

Arches on arches! as it were that Rome,
 Collecting the chief trophies of her line,
 Would build up all her triumphs in one
 dome,
 Her Coliseum stands; the moonbeams
 shine
 As 'twere its natural torches, for di-
 vine
 Should be the light which streams here to
 illumine
 This long-explored but still exhaustless
 mine
 Of contemplation; and the azure gloom
 Of an Italian night, where the deep skies as-
 sume

¹An East Indian tree said to exude poison.

²*Macbeth*, III, iv, 24.

129

Hues which have words, and speak to ye of
 heaven,
 Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monu-
 ment,
 And shadows forth its glory. There is
 given
 Unto the things of earth, which Time hath
 bent,
 A spirit's feeling, and where he hath leant
 His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a
 power
 And magic in the ruined battlement,
 For which the palace of the present hour
 Must yield its pomp, and wait till ages are its
 dower.

130

Oh Time! the beautifier of the dead,
 Adorner of the ruin, comforter
 And only healer when the heart hath bled;
 Time! the corrector where our judgments
 err,
 The test of truth, love—sole philosopher,
 For all beside are sophists—from thy
 thrift,
 Which never loses though it doth defer—
 Time, the avenger! unto thee I lift
 My hands, and eyes, and heart, and crave of
 thee a gift:

131

Amidst this wreck, where thou hast made
 a shrine
 And temple more divinely desolate,
 Among thy mightier offerings here are
 mine,
 Ruins of years, though few, yet full of fate:
 If thou hast ever seen me too elate,
 Hear me not; but if calmly I have borne
 Good, and reserved my pride against the
 hate
 Which shall not whelm me, let me not have
 worn
 This iron in my soul in vain—shall *they* not
 mourn?

132

And thou, who never yet of human wrong
 Left the unbalanced scale, great Nemesis!
 Here, where the ancient paid thee homage
 long—
 Thou who didst call the Furies from the
 abyss,

And round Orestes bade them howl and hiss
 For that unnatural retribution¹—just,
 Had it but been from hands less near—in
 this
 Thy former realm, I call thee from the
 dust!
 Dost thou not hear my heart?—Awake! thou
 shalt, and must.

133

It is not that I may not have incurred
 For my ancestral faults or mine the
 wound
 I bleed withal, and, had it been con-
 ferred
 With a just weapon, it had flowed un-
 bound;
 But now my blood shall not sink in the
 ground;
 To thee I do devote it—*thou* shalt take
 The vengeance, which shall yet be sought
 and found,
 Which if *I* have not taken for the sake——
 But let that pass—I sleep, but thou shalt yet
 awake.

134

And if my voice break forth, 'tis not that
 now
 I shrink from what is suffered: let him
 speak
 Who hath beheld decline upon my brow,
 Or seen my mind's convulsion leave it
 weak;
 But in this page a record will I seek.
 Not in the air shall these my words dis-
 perse,
 Though I be ashes; a far hour shall wreak
 The deep prophetic fullness of this verse,
 And pile on human heads the mountain of my
 curse!

135

That curse shall be Forgiveness.—Have I
 not—
 Hear me, my mother Earth! behold it,
 Heaven!
 Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?
 Have I not suffered things to be forgiven?

¹For slaying his mother Clytemnestra. She and her lover Ægisthus had murdered Agamemnon, her husband and the father of Orestes.

Have I not had my brain seared, my heart
 riven,
 Hopes sapped, name blighted, Life's life
 lied away?
 And only not to desperation driven,
 Because not altogether of such clay
 As rots into the souls of those whom I survey.

136

From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy
 Have I not seen what human things could
 do?
 From the loud roar of foaming calumny
 To the small whisper of the as paltry
 few,
 And subtler venom of the reptile crew,
 The Janus glance of whose significant
 eye,
 Learning to lie with silence, would *seem*
 true,
 And without utterance, save the shrug or
 sigh,
 Deal round to happy fools its speechless
 obloquy.

137

But I have lived, and have not lived in
 vain:
 My mind may lose its force, my blood its
 fire,
 And my frame perish even in conquering
 pain;
 But there is that within me which shall
 tire
 Torture and Time, and breathe when I
 expire;
 Something unearthly, which they deem
 not of,
 Like the remembered tone of a mute lyre,
 Shall on their softened spirits sink, and
 move
 In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of
 love.

138

The seal is set.—Now welcome, thou dread
 power!
 Nameless, yet thus omnipotent, which
 here
 Walk'st in the shadow of the midnight
 hour
 With a deep awe, yet all distinct from
 fear;

Thy haunts are ever where the dead walls
rear

Their ivy mantles, and the solemn scene
Derives from thee a sense so deep and clear
That we become a part of what has been,
And grow unto the spot, all-seeing but un-
seen.

139

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,
In murmured pity, or loud-roared applause
As man was slaughtered by his fellowman.
And wherefore slaughtered? wherefore,
but because

Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,
And the imperial pleasure.—Wherefore
not?

What matters where we fall to fill the
maws

Of worms—on battle-plains or listed spot?
Both are but theaters where the chief actors
rot.

140

I see before me the Gladiator lie:¹

He leans upon his hand—his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his drooped head sinks gradually
low—

And through his side the last drops, ebbing
slow

From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now

The arena swims around him—he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed
the wretch who won.

141

He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far
away;

He recked not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian² mother—he, their
sire,

Butchered to make a Roman holiday—
All this rushed with his blood—Shall he
expire

And unavenged? Arise! ye Goths, and glut
your ire!

¹Byron describes a statue in the Museum of the Capitol now generally called "The Dying Gaul."

²Dacia lay along the north bank of the lower Danube.

142

But here, where Murder breathed her
bloody steam;

And here, where buzzing nations choked
the ways,

And roared or murmured like a mountain
stream

Dashing or winding as its torrent strays;
Here, where the Roman million's blame or
praise

Was death or life, the playthings of a
crowd,

My voice sounds much—and fall the stars'
faint rays

On the arena void—seats crushed—walls
bowed—

And galleries, where my steps seem echoes
strangely loud.

143

A ruin—yet what ruin! from its mass
Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been
reared;

Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,
And marvel where the spoil could have
appeared.

Hath it indeed been plundered, or but
cleared?

Alas! developed, opens the decay,

When the colossal fabric's form is neared:

It will not bear the brightness of the day,
Which streams too much on all years, man,
have reft away.

144

But when the rising moon begins to climb
Its topmost arch, and gently pauses there;
When the stars twinkle through the loops
of time,

And the low night-breeze waves along the air
The garland-forest, which the gray walls
wear,

Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's head;³
When the light shines serene but doth not
glare,

Then in this magic circle raise the dead:
Heroes have trod this spot—'tis on their
dust ye tread.

³Suetonius informs us that Julius Cæsar was particularly gratified by the decree of the senate which enabled him to wear a wreath of laurel on all occasions. He was anxious, not to show that he was the conqueror of the world, but to hide that he was bald. A stranger at Rome would hardly have guessed at the motive, nor should we without the help of the historian (Byron's note).

145

"While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;
When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;
And when Rome falls—the World."¹
From our own land
Thus spake the pilgrims o'er this mighty wall
In Saxon times, which we are wont to call
Ancient; and these three mortal things are still
On their foundations, and unaltered all;
Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's skill,
The World, the same wide den—of thieves,
or what ye will.

146

Simple, erect, severe, austere, sublime—
Shrine of all saints and temple of all gods,
From Jove to Jesus—spared and bless'd
by time;
Looking tranquillity, while falls or nods
Arch, empire, each thing round thee, and
man plods
His way through thorns to ashes—glorious
dome!
Shalt thou not last? Time's scythe and
tyrants' rods
Shiver upon thee—sanctuary and home
Of art and piety—Pantheon!—pride of
Rome!

147

Relic of nobler days, and noblest arts!
Despoiled yet perfect, with thy circle
spreads
A holiness appealing to all hearts—
To art a model; and to him who treads
Rome for the sake of ages, Glory sheds
Her light through thy sole aperture; to
those
Who worship, here are altars for their
beads;
And they who feel for genius may repose
Their eyes on honored forms, whose busts
around them close.

148

There is a dungeon, in whose dim drear
light
What do I gaze on? Nothing: Look again!

¹As Byron notes, this saying is quoted from Bede by Gibbon.

Two forms are slowly shadowed on my
sight—²

Two insulated phantoms of the brain:
It is not so; I see them full and plain—
An old man, and a female young and fair,
Fresh as a nursing mother, in whose vein
The blood is nectar:—but what doth she
there,
With her unmantled neck, and bosom white
and bare?

149

Full swells the deep pure fountain of young
life,
Where *on* the heart and *from* the heart we
took
Our first and sweetest nurture, when the
wife,
Bless'd into mother, in the innocent look,
Or even the piping cry of lips that brook
No pain and small suspense, a joy per-
ceives
Man knows not, when from out its cradled
nook
She sees her little bud put forth its leaves—
What may the fruit be yet? I know not—
Cain was Eve's.

150

But here youth offers to old age the food,
The milk of his own gift: it is her sire
To whom she renders back the debt of
blood
Born with her birth. No; he shall not
expire
While in those warm and lovely veins the
fire
Of health and holy feeling can provide
Great Nature's Nile, whose deep stream
rises higher
Than Egypt's river: from that gentle side
Drink, drink and live, old man! Heaven's
realm holds no such tide.

151

The starry fable of the milky way
Has not thy story's purity; it is
A constellation of a sweeter ray,
And sacred Nature triumphs more in this

²The story of the Roman woman who kept her im-
prisoned father alive as Byron tells and, as a reward of
her devotion, obtained his pardon, has been doubtfully
localized at the Church of S. Nicola in Carcere.

Reverse of her decree, than in the abyss
Where sparkle distant worlds:—Oh, holiest
nurse!

No drop of that clear stream its way shall
miss

* To thy sire's heart, replenishing its source
With life, as our freed souls rejoin the uni-
verse.

152

Turn to the mole¹ which Hadrian reared on
high,

Imperial mimic of old Egypt's piles,
Colossal copyist of deformity
Whose traveled phantasy from the far
Nile's

Enormous model, doomed the artist's toils
To build for giants, and for his vain earth,
His shrunken ashes, raise this dome: How
smiles

The gazer's eye with philosophic mirth,
To view the huge design which sprung from
such a birth!

153

But lo! the dome²—the vast and wondrous
dome,

To which Diana's marvel was a cell—
Christ's mighty shrine above his martyr's
tomb!

I have beheld the Ephesian's miracle;³
Its columns strew the wilderness, and
dwell

The hyæna and the jackal in their shade;
I have beheld Sophia's⁴ bright roofs swell
Their glittering mass i' the sun, and have
surveyed

Its sanctuary the while the usurping Moslem
prayed;

154

But thou, of temples old, or altars
new,

Standest alone, with nothing like to thee—
Worthiest of God, the holy and the true.
Since Zion's desolation, when that He

¹Now called the Castle of St. Angelo.

²Of St. Peter's.

³The Temple of Diana (Artemis) of Ephesus, one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. Byron was mistaken in thinking he had seen its ruins, as they were not opened to view until 1870.

⁴The Mosque of Santa Sophia at Constantinople.

Forsook his former city, what could be,
Of earthly structures, in his honor piled,
Of a sublimer aspect? Majesty,
Power, Glory, Strength, and Beauty all are
aisled

In this eternal ark of worship undefiled.

155

Enter: its grandeur overwhelms thee not;
And why? It is not lessened; but thy
mind,

Expanded by the genius of the spot,
Has grown colossal, and can only find
A fit abode wherein appear enshrined
Thy hopes of immortality; and thou
Shalt one day, if found worthy, so de-
fined,

See thy God face to face, as thou dost now
His Holy of Holies, nor be blasted by his
brow.

156

Thou movest, but increasing with the ad-
vance,

Like climbing some great Alp, which still
doth rise,

Deceived by its gigantic elegance;
Vastness which grows, but grows to har-
monize—

All musical in its immensities;
Rich marbles, richer painting—shrines
where flame

The lamps of gold—and haughty dome
which vies

In air with Earth's chief structures,
though their frame
Sits on the firm-set ground, and this the
clouds must claim.

157

Thou seest not all; but piecemeal thou
must break,

To separate contemplation, the great
whole;

And as the ocean many bays will make
That ask the eye—so here condense thy
soul

To more immediate objects, and control
Thy thoughts until thy mind hath got by
heart

Its eloquent proportions, and unroll
In mighty graduations, part by part,

The glory which at once upon thee did not
dart,

158

Not by its fault—but thine: Our outward sense
 Is but of gradual grasp—and as it is
 That what we have of feeling most intense
 Outstrips our faint expression; even so this
 Outshining and o'erwhelming edifice
 Fools our fond gaze, and greatest of the great
 Defies at first our Nature's littleness,
 Till, growing with its growth, we thus dilate
 Our spirits to the size of that they contemplate.

159

Then pause, and be enlightened; there is more
 In such a survey than the sating gaze
 Of wonder pleased, or awe which would adore
 The worship of the place, or the mere praise
 Of art and its great masters, who could raise
 What former time, nor skill, nor thought could plan;
 The fountain of sublimity displays
 Its depth, and thence may draw the mind of man
 Its golden sands, and learn what great conceptions can.

160

Or, turning to the Vatican, go see
 Laocoön's torture dignifying pain—
 A father's love and mortal's agony
 With an immortal's patience blending:
 Vain
 The struggle; vain, against the coiling strain
 And gripe, and deepening of the dragon's grasp,
 The old man's clench; the long envenomed chain
 Rivets the living links,—the enormous asp
 Enforces pang on pang, and stifles gasp on gasp.

161

Or view the Lord of the unerring bow,¹
 The God of life, and poesy, and light—

¹The statue called the Apollo Belvedere.

The Sun in human limbs arrayed, and brow
 All radiant from his triumph in the fight;
 The shaft hath just been shot—the arrow bright
 With an immortal's vengeance; in his eye
 And nostril beautiful disdain, and might
 And majesty, flash their full lightnings by,
 Developing in that one glance the Deity.

162

But in his delicate form—a dream of Love,
 Shaped by some solitary nymph, whose breast
 Longed for a deathless lover from above,
 And maddened in that vision—are expressed
 All that ideal beauty ever blessed
 The mind with in its most unearthly mood,
 When each conception was a heavenly guest—
 A ray of immortality—and stood
 Starlike, around, until they gathered to a god!

163

And if it be Prometheus stole from Heaven
 The fire which we endure, it was repaid
 By him to whom the energy was given
 Which this poetic marble hath arrayed
 With an eternal glory—which, if made
 By human hands, is not of human thought;
 And Time himself hath hallowed it, nor laid
 One ringlet in the dust—nor hath it caught
 A tinge of years, but breathes the flame with which 'twas wrought.

164

But where is he, the Pilgrim of my song,
 The being who upheld it through the past?
 Methinks he cometh late and tarries long.
 He is no more—these breathings are his last;
 His wanderings done, his visions ebbing fast,
 And he himself as nothing:—if he was
 Aught but a phantasy, and could be classed
 With forms which live and suffer—let that pass—
 His shadow fades away into Destruction's mass,

165

Which gathers shadow, substance, life, and all
That we inherit in its mortal shroud,
And spreads the dim and universal pall
Through which all things grow phantoms;
and the cloud
Between us sinks and all which ever
glowed,
Till Glory's self is twilight, and displays
A melancholy halo scarce allowed
To hover on the verge of darkness; rays
Sadder than saddest night, for they distract
the gaze,

166

And send us prying into the abyss,
To gather what we shall be when the
frame
Shall be resolved to something less than
this
Its wretched essence; and to dream of
fame,
And wipe the dust from off the idle
name
We never more shall hear,—but never
more,
Oh, happier thought! can we be made the
same:
It is enough in sooth that *once* we bore
These fardels¹ of the heart—the heart whose
sweat was gore.

167

Hark! forth from the abyss a voice pro-
ceeds,²
A long low distant murmur of dread sound,
Such as arises when a nation bleeds
With some deep and immedicable wound;
Through storm and darkness yawns the
rending ground,
The gulf is thick with phantoms, but the
chief
Seems royal still, though with her head dis-
crowned,
And pale, but lovely, with maternal grief
She clasps a babe, to whom her breast yields
no relief.

¹Burdens.

²In this and following stanzas Byron laments the death in childbirth of the Princess Charlotte (on 6 November, 1817), only daughter of the Prince Regent, afterwards George IV.

168

Scion of chiefs and monarchs, where art
thou?
Fond hope of many nations, art thou
dead?
Could not the grave forget thee, and lay
low
Some less majestic, less beloved head?
In the sad midnight, while thy heart still
bled,
The mother of a moment, o'er thy boy,
Death hushed that pang for ever: with thee
fed
The present happiness and promised joy
Which filled the imperial isles so full it
seemed to cloy.

169

Peasants bring forth in safety.—Can it
be,
Oh thou that wert so happy, so adored!
Those who weep not for kings shall weep
for thee,
And Freedom's heart, grown heavy, cease
to hoard
Her many griefs for ONE; for she had
poured
Her orisons for thee, and o'er thy head
Beheld her Iris.—Thou, too, lonely lord,
And desolate consort³—vainly wert thou
wed!
The husband of a year! the father of the
dead!

170

Of sackcloth was thy wedding garment
made;
Thy bridal's fruit is ashes: in the dust
The fair-haired Daughter of the Isles is
laid,
The love of millions! How we did intrust
Futurity to her! and, though it must
Darken above our bones, yet fondly
deemed
Our children should obey her child, and
blessed
Her and her hoped-for seed, whose promise
seemed
Like stars to shepherd's eyes:—'twas but a
meteor beamed.

³Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, later the first king of Belgium.

171

Woe unto us, not her; for she sleeps well:
 The fickle reek of popular breath, the
 tongue
 Of hollow counsel, the false oracle,
 Which from the birth of monarchy hath
 rung
 Its knell in princely ears, till the o'erstung
 Nations have armed in madness, the
 strange fate
 Which tumbles mightiest sovereigns, and
 hath flung
 Against their blind omnipotence a weight
 Within the opposing scale, which crushes
 soon or late,—

172

These might have been her destiny; but no,
 Our hearts deny it: and so young, so fair,
 Good without effort, great without a foe;
 But now a bride and mother—and now
there!
 How many ties did that stern moment
 tear!
 From thy Sire's to his humblest subject's
 breast
 Is linked the electric chain of that despair,
 Whose shock was as an earthquake's, and
 oppressed
 The land which loved thee so that none could
 love thee best.

173

Lo, Nemi!¹ naved in the woody hills
 So far, that the uprooting wind which
 tears
 The oak from his foundation, and which
 spills
 The ocean o'er its boundary, and bears
 Its form against the skies, reluctant spares
 The oval mirror of thy glassy lake;
 And calm as cherished hate, its surface
 wears
 A deep cold settled aspect nought can
 shake,
 All coiled into itself and round, as sleeps the
 snake.

¹The following stanzas set forth the prospect seen from the Alban Mount (modern name, Monte Cavo). First is seen the little lake of Nemi to the south, farther to the right a larger lake, that of Albano, to the west, farther away towards the west and north-west the coast of Latium and the Tiber, still farther away Tusculum (Frascati) where Cicero's estate lay, and farthest of all Tibur (Tivoli) where was Horace's farm (A. Mommsen).

174

And near, Albano's scarce divided waves
 Shine from a sister valley;—and afar
 The Tiber winds, and the broad ocean
 laves
 The Latian coast where sprung the Epic
 war,
 "Arms and the man,"² whose re-ascending
 star
 Rose o'er an empire:—but beneath thy
 right
 Tully reposed from Rome;—and where
 yon bar
 Of girdling mountains intercepts the sight
 The Sabine farm was tilled, the weary bard's
 delight.

175

But I forget.—My Pilgrim's shrine is won,
 And he and I must part,—so let it be,—
 His task and mine alike are nearly done;
 Yet once more let us look upon the sea;
 The midland ocean breaks on him and me,
 And from the Alban Mount we now be-
 hold
 Our friend of youth, that Ocean, which
 when we
 Beheld it last by Calpe's rock unfold
 Those waves, we followed on till the dark
 Euxine rolled

176

Upon the blue Symplegades: long years—
 Long, though not very many—since have
 done
 Their work on both; some suffering and
 some tears
 Have left us nearly where we had begun;
 Yet not in vain our mortal race hath run;
 We have had our reward, and it is here,—
 That we can yet feel gladdened by the sun,
 And reap from earth, sea, joy almost as
 dear
 As if there were no man to trouble what is
 clear.

177

Oh! that the Desert were my dwelling-
 place,
 With one fair Spirit for my minister,
 That I might all forget the human race,
 And, hating no one, love but only her!

²*Arma virumque*, beginning of the first line of the *Æneid*.

Ye elements!—in whose ennobling stir
I feel myself exalted—Can ye not
Accord me such a being? Do I err
In deeming such inhabit many a spot?
Though with them to converse can rarely be
our lot.

178

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:
I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I
steal

From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all con-
ceal.

179

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—
roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in
vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his con-
trol
Stops with the shore; upon the watery
plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth re-
main
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling
groan,
Without a grave, unknelled, uncoffined, and
unknown.

180

His steps are not upon thy paths,—thy
fields
Are not a spoil for him,—thou dost arise
And shake him from thee; the vile strength
he wields
For earth's destruction thou dost all de-
spise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful
spray
And howling, to his Gods, where haply
lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth:—there let
him lay.

181

The armaments which thunderstrike the
walls
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war—
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which
mar
Alike the Armada's pride or spoils of Trafal-
gar.¹

182

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save
thee—
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what
are they?
Thy waters washed them power while they
were free,
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts:—not so
thou;—
Unchangeable, save to thy wild waves'
play,
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure
brow:
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest
now.

183

Thou glorious mirror, where the Al-
mighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,—
Calm or convulsed, in breeze, or gale, or
storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving—boundless, endless, and
sublime,
The image of eternity, the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made; each
zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathom-
less, alone.

¹The Spanish Armada, which sailed against England in 1588, and the cape on the south-west coast of Spain near which was the scene of the English naval victory over the French in which Nelson lost his life (1805). The Armada was destroyed chiefly by storms, and "the gale which succeeded the battle of Trafalgar destroyed the greater part (if not all) of the prizes—nineteen sail of the line—taken on that memorable day" (Byron).

184

And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to
be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward: from a
boy
I wantoned with thy breakers—they to
me
Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror—'twas a pleasing
fear,
For I was as it were a child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do
here.

185

My task is done, my song hath ceased, my
theme
Has died into an echo; it is fit
The spell should break of this protracted
dream,
The torch shall be extinguished which hath
lit
My midnight lamp—and what is writ, is
writ;
Would it were worthier! but I am not
now
That which I have been—and my visions
flit
Less palpably before me—and the glow
Which in my spirit dwelt is fluttering, faint,
and low.

186

Farewell! a word that must be, and hath
been—
A sound which makes us linger;—yet—
farewell!
Ye! who have traced the Pilgrim to the
scene
Which is his last, if in your memories
dwell
A thought which once was his, if on ye
swell
A single recollection, not in vain
He wore his sandal-shoon and scallop-
shell;¹
Farewell! with *him* alone may rest the pain,
If such there were—with *you*, the moral of
his strain.

¹Token of a pilgrim.

MAID OF ATHENS, ERE WE PART²

Ζώη μου, σὰς ἀγαπῶ.³

MAID of Athens, ere we part,
Give, oh give me back my heart!
Or, since that has left my breast,
Keep it now, and take the rest!
Hear my vow before I go,
Ζώη μου, σὰς ἀγαπῶ.

By those tresses unconfined,
Wooed by each Ægean wind;
By those lids whose jetty fringe
Kiss thy soft cheeks' blooming tinge;
By those wild eyes like the roe,
Ζώη μου, σὰς ἀγαπῶ.

By that lip I long to taste;
By that zone-encircled waist;
By all the token-flowers that tell
What words can never speak so well;
By love's alternate joy and woe,
Ζώη μου, σὰς ἀγαπῶ.

Maid of Athens! I am gone:
Think of me, sweet! when alone.
Though I fly to Istambol,⁴
Athens holds my heart and soul:
Can I cease to love thee? No!
Ζώη μου, σὰς ἀγαπῶ.

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY⁵

I

SHE walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

II

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

²Written at Athens in 1810, published in 1812. Supposed to have been addressed to Theresa Macri, with whose mother Byron lodged while in Athens.

³My life, I love you.

⁴Constantinople.

⁵Written in 1814, published in 1815.

III

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
 So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
 The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
 But tell of days in goodness spent,
 A mind at peace with all below,
 A heart whose love is innocent!

THE DESTRUCTION OF
SENNACHERIB¹

I

THE Assyrian came down like the wolf on the
 fold,
 And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and
 gold;
 And the sheen of their spears was like stars
 on the sea,
 When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep
 Galilee.

II

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is
 green,
 That host with their banners at sunset were
 seen:
 Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn
 hath blown,
 That host on the morrow lay withered and
 strown.

III

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on
 the blast,
 And breathed in the face of the foe as he
 passed;
 And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly
 and chill,
 And their hearts but once heaved, and for
 ever grew still!

IV

And there lay the steed with his nostril all
 wide,
 But through it there rolled not the breath of
 his pride;
 And the foam of his gasping lay white on the
 turf,
 And cold as the spray of the rock-beating
 surf.

V

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
 With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his
 mail:
 And the tents were all silent, the banners
 alone,
 The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

VI

And the widows of Ashur² are loud in their
 wail,
 And the idols are broke in the temple of
 Baal;
 And the might of the Gentile, unsmeared by
 the sword,
 Hath melted like snow in the glance of the
 Lord!

WHEN WE TWO PARTED³

WHEN we two parted
 In silence and tears,
 Half broken-hearted
 To sever for years,
 Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
 Colder thy kiss;
 Truly that hour foretold
 Sorrow to this.

The dew of the morning
 Sunk chill on my brow—
 It felt like the warning
 Of what I feel now.
 Thy vows are all broken,
 And light is thy fame:
 I hear thy name spoken,
 And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,
 A knell to mine ear;
 A shudder comes o'er me—
 Why wert thou so dear?
 They know not I knew thee,
 Who knew thee too well:—
 Long, long shall I rue thee,
 Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met—
 In silence I grieve,
 That thy heart could forget,
 Thy spirit deceive.

¹Written and published in 1815. See 2 Kings, xviii-ix.

²Assyria.

³Written in 1808, published in 1816.

If I should meet thee
 After long years,
 How should I greet thee?—
 With silence and tears.

STANZAS FOR MUSIC¹

THERE'S not a joy the world can give like
 that it takes away,
 When the glow of early thought declines in
 feeling's dull decay;
 'Tis not on youth's smooth cheek the blush
 alone, which fades so fast,
 But the tender bloom of heart is gone, ere
 youth itself be past.

Then the few whose spirits float above the
 wreck of happiness
 Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt or ocean of
 excess:

The magnet of their course is gone, or only
 points in vain

The shore to which their shivered sail shall
 never stretch again.

Then the mortal coldness of the soul like
 death itself comes down;

It cannot feel for others' woes, it dare not
 dream its own;

That heavy chill has frozen o'er the fountain
 of our tears,

And though the eye may sparkle still, 'tis
 where the ice appears.

Though wit may flash from fluent lips, and
 mirth distract the breast,

Through midnight hours that yield no more
 their former hope of rest;

'Tis but as ivy-leaves around the ruined
 turret wreath,

All green and wildly fresh without, but worn
 and gray beneath.

Oh could I feel as I have felt,—or be what I
 have been,

Or weep as I could once have wept o'er many
 a vanished scene;

As springs in deserts found seem sweet, all
 brackish though they be,

So, midst the withered waste of life, those
 tears would flow to me.

¹Written in 1815, published in 1816.

STANZAS FOR MUSIC²

THERE be none of Beauty's daughters
 With a magic like thee;

And like music on the waters

Is thy sweet voice to me:

When, as if its sound were causing

The charmed ocean's pausing,

The waves lie still and gleaming,

And the lulled winds seem dreaming:

And the midnight moon is weaving

Her bright chain o'er the deep;

Whose breast is gently heaving,

As an infant's asleep:

So the spirit bows before thee,

To listen and adore thee;

With a full but soft emotion,

Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

SONNET ON CHILLON³

ETERNAL Spirit of the chainless Mind!

Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,

For there thy habitation is the heart—

The heart which love of thee alone can bind;

And when thy sons to fetters are consigned—

To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless
 gloom,

Their country conquers with their martyr-
 dom,

And Freedom's fame finds wings on every
 wind.

Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,

And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod,

Until his very steps have left a trace

Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,

By Bonnivard!⁴ May none those marks
 efface!

For they appeal from tyranny to God.

²Written and published in 1816.

³This and the following poem were written in June, 1816, immediately after a visit with Shelley to the Castle of Chillon; published in the same year. The Castle is on the shore of the Lake of Geneva at the end farthest from the city of Geneva.

⁴A Swiss republican (1493-1570) who aided the Genevese in an attempt to free their city from the rule of the Duke of Savoy. He was imprisoned for six years at Chillon, four of which were spent in the cell Byron describes. At the time when Byron wrote his poem he knew little or nothing of the actual history of Bonnivard, so that Byron's "Prisoner" is largely an imaginary character.

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

I

MY HAIR is gray, but not with years,
 Nor grew it white
 In a single night,
 As men's have grown from sudden fears:
 My limbs are bowed, though not with toil,
 But rusted with a vile repose,
 For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
 And mine has been the fate of those
 To whom the goodly earth and air
 Are banned, and barred—forbidden fare:
 But this was for my father's faith
 I suffered chains and courted death;
 That father perished at the stake
 For tenets he would not forsake;
 And for the same his lineal race
 In darkness found a dwelling-place;
 We were seven—who now are one,
 Six in youth, and one in age,
 Finished as they had begun,
 Proud of Persecution's rage;
 One in fire, and two in field,
 Their belief with blood have sealed,
 Dying as their father died,
 For the God their foes denied;
 Three were in a dungeon cast,
 Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II

There are seven pillars of Gothic mold,
 In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
 There are seven columns, massy and gray,
 Dim with a dull imprisoned ray,
 A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
 And through the crevice and the cleft
 Of the thick wall is fallen and left;
 Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
 Like a marsh's meteor lamp:
 And in each pillar there is a ring,
 And in each ring there is a chain; }
 That iron is a cankering thing,
 For in these limbs its teeth remain,
 With marks that will not wear away,
 Till I have done with this new day,
 Which now is painful to these eyes,
 Which have not seen the sun so rise
 For years—I cannot count them o'er,
 I lost their long and heavy score,
 When my last brother drooped and died,
 And I lay living by his side.

III

They chained us each to a column stone,
 And we were three—yet, each alone;
 We could not move a single pace,
 We could not see each other's face,
 But with that pale and livid light
 That made us strangers in our sight:
 And thus together—yet apart,
 Fettered in hand, but joined in heart,
 'Twas still some solace, in the dearth
 Of the pure elements of earth,
 To hearken to each other's speech,
 And each turn comforter to each
 With some new hope, or legend old,
 Or song heroically bold;
 But even these at length grew cold.
 Our voices took a dreary tone,
 An echo of the dungeon stone,
 A grating sound, not full and free,
 As they of yore were wont to be:
 It might be fancy, but to me
 They never sounded like our own.

IV

I was the eldest of the three,
 And to uphold and cheer the rest
 I ought to do—and did my best—
 And each did well in his degree.
 The youngest, whom my father loved,
 Because our mother's brow was given
 To him, with eyes as blue as heaven—
 For him my soul was sorely moved;
 And truly might it be distressed
 To see such bird in such a nest;
 For he was beautiful as day—
 (When day was beautiful to me
 As to young eagles, being free)—
 A polar day, which will not see
 A sunset till its summer's gone,
 Its sleepless summer of long light,
 The snow-clad offspring of the sun:
 And thus he was as pure and bright,
 And in his natural spirit gay,
 With tears for nought but others' ills,
 And then they flowed like mountain rills,
 Unless he could assuage the woe
 Which he abhorred to view below.

V

The other was as pure of mind,
 But formed to combat with his kind;
 Strong in his frame, and of a mood
 Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,

And perished in the foremost rank
 With joy:—but not in chains to pine:
 His spirit withered with their clank,
 I saw it silently decline—
 And so perchance in sooth did mine:
 But yet I forced it on to cheer
 Those relics of a home so dear.
 He was a hunter of the hills,
 Had followed there the deer and wolf;
 To him his dungeon was a gulf,
 And fettered feet the worst of ills.

VI

Lake Leman lies by Chillon's walls:
 A thousand feet in depth below
 Its massy waters meet and flow;
 Thus much the fathom-line was sent
 From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
 Which round about the wave enthralls:
 A double dungeon wall and wave
 Have made—and like a living grave
 Below the surface of the lake
 The dark vault lies wherein we lay,
 We heard it ripple night and day;
 Sounding o'er our heads it knocked;
 And I have felt the winter's spray
 Wash through the bars when winds were
 high
 And wanton in the happy sky;
 And then the very rock hath rocked,
 And I have felt it shake, unshocked,
 Because I could have smiled to see
 The death that would have set me free.

VII

I said my nearer brother pined,
 I said his mighty heart declined,
 He loathed and put away his food;
 It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,
 For we were used to hunter's fare,
 And for the like had little care:
 The milk drawn from the mountain goat
 Was changed for water from the moat,
 Our bread was such as captives' tears
 Have moistened many a thousand years,
 Since man first pent his fellow men
 Like brutes within an iron den;
 But what were these to us or him?
 These wasted not his heart or limb;
 My brother's soul was of that mold
 Which in a palace had grown cold,
 Had his free breathing been denied
 The range of the steep mountain's side;

But why delay the truth?—he died.
 I saw, and could not hold his head,
 Nor reach his dying hand—nor dead,—
 Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
 To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
 He died, and they unlocked his chain,
 And scooped for him a shallow grave
 Even from the cold earth of our cave.
 I begged them as a boon to lay
 His corse in dust whereon the day
 Might shine—it was a foolish thought,
 But then within my brain it wrought,
 That even in death his freeborn breast
 In such a dungeon could not rest.
 I might have spared my idle prayer—
 They coldly laughed, and laid him there:
 The flat and turfless earth above
 The being we so much did love;
 His empty chain above it leant,
 Such murder's fitting monument!

VIII

But he, the favorite and the flower,
 Most cherished since his natal hour,
 His mother's image in fair face,
 The infant love of all his race,
 His martyred father's dearest thought,
 My latest care, for whom I sought
 To hoard my life, that his might be
 Less wretched now, and one day free;
 He, too, who yet had held untired
 A spirit natural or inspired—
 He, too, was struck, and day by day
 Was withered on the stalk away.
 Oh, God! it is a fearful thing
 To see the human soul take wing
 In any shape, in any mood:
 I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
 I've seen it on the breaking ocean
 Strive with a swoll'n convulsive motion,
 I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
 Of Sin delirious with its dread;
 But these were horrors—this was woe
 Unmixed with such—but sure and slow:
 He faded, and so calm and meek,
 So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
 So tearless, yet so tender, kind,
 And grieved for those he left behind;
 With all the while a cheek whose bloom
 Was as a mockery of the tomb,
 Whose tints as gently sunk away
 As a departing rainbow's ray;
 An eye of most transparent light,
 That almost made the dungeon bright,

And not a word of murmur, not
 A groan o'er his untimely lot,—
 A little talk of better days,
 A little hope my own to raise,
 For I was sunk in silence—lost
 In this last loss, of all the most;
 And then the sighs he would suppress
 Of fainting nature's feebleness,
 More slowly drawn, grew less and less:
 I listened, but I could not hear;
 I called, for I was wild with fear;
 I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
 Would not be thus admonishéd;
 I called, and thought I heard a sound—
 I burst my chain with one strong bound,
 And rushed to him:—I found him not,
 I only stirred in this black spot,
 I only lived, I only drew
 The accurséd breath of dungeon-dew;
 The last, the sole, the dearest link
 Between me and the eternal brink,
 Which bound me to my failing race,
 Was broken in this fatal place.
 One on the earth, and one beneath—
 My brothers—both had ceased to breathe:
 I took that hand which lay so still,
 Alas! my own was full as chill;
 I had not strength to stir, or strive,
 But felt that I was still alive—
 A frantic feeling, when we know
 That what we love shall ne'er be so.
 I know not why
 I could not die,
 I had no earthly hope but faith,
 And that forbade a selfish death.

IX

What next befell me then and there
 I know not well—I never knew—
 First came the loss of light, and air,
 And then of darkness too:
 I had no thought, no feeling—none—
 Among the stones I stood a stone,
 And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
 As shrubless crags within the mist;
 For all was blank, and bleak, and gray;
 It was not night, it was not day;
 It was not even the dungeon-light,
 So hateful to my heavy sight,
 But vacancy absorbing space,
 And fixedness without a place;
 There were no stars, no earth, no time,
 No check, no change, no good, no crime,
 But silence, and a stirless breath

Which neither was of life nor death;
 A sea of stagnant idleness,
 Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

X

A light broke in upon my brain,—
 It was the carol of a bird;
 It ceased, and then it came again,
 The sweetest song ear ever heard,
 And mine was thankful till my eyes
 Ran over with the glad surprise,
 And they that moment could not see
 I was the mate of misery;
 But then by dull degrees came back
 My senses to their wonted track;
 I saw the dungeon walls and floor
 Close slowly round me as before,
 I saw the glimmer of the sun
 Creeping as it before had done,
 But through the crevice where it came
 That bird was perched, as fond and tame,
 And tamer than upon the tree;
 A lovely bird, with azure wings,
 And song that said a thousand things,
 And seemed to say them all for me!
 I never saw its like before,
 I ne'er shall see its likeness more:
 It seemed like me to want a mate,
 But was not half so desolate,
 And it was come to love me when
 None lived to love me so again,
 And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
 Had brought me back to feel and think.
 I know not if it late were free,

Or broke its cage to perch on mine,
 But knowing well captivity,
 Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!
 Or if it were, in wingéd guise,
 A visitant from Paradise;
 For—Heaven forgive that thought! the while
 Which made me both to weep and smile—
 I sometimes deemed that it might be
 My brother's soul come down to me;
 But then at last away it flew,
 And then 'twas mortal well I knew,
 For he would never thus have flown,
 And left me twice so doubly lone,
 Lone as the corse within its shroud,
 Lone as a solitary cloud,—

A single cloud on a sunny day,
 While all the rest of heaven is clear,
 A frown upon the atmosphere,
 That hath no business to appear
 When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

XI

A kind of change came in my fate,
 My keepers grew compassionate;
 I know not what had made them so,
 They were inured to sights of woe,
 But so it was:—my broken chain
 With links unfastened did remain,
 And it was liberty to stride
 Along my cell from side to side,
 And up and down, and then athwart,
 And tread it over every part;
 And round the pillars one by one,
 Returning where my walk begun,
 Avoiding only, as I trod,
 My brothers' graves without a sod;
 For if I thought with heedless tread
 My step profaned their lowly bed,
 My breath came gaspingly and thick,
 And my crushed heart felt blind and sick.

XII

I made a footing in the wall,
 It was not therefrom to escape,
 For I had buried one and all
 Who loved me in a human shape;
 And the whole earth would henceforth be
 A wider prison unto me:
 No child, no sire, no kin had I,
 No partner in my misery;
 I thought of this, and I was glad,
 For thought of them had¹ made me mad;
 But I was curious to ascend
 To my barred windows, and to bend
 Once more, upon the mountains high,
 The quiet of a loving eye.

XIII

I saw them, and they were the same,
 They were not changed like me in frame;
 I saw their thousand years of snow
 On high—their wide long lake below,
 And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
 I heard the torrents leap and gush
 O'er channeled rock and broken bush;
 I saw the white-walled distant town,
 And whiter sails go skimming down;
 And then there was a little isle,
 Which in my very face did smile,
 The only one in view;

¹Would have.

A small green isle, it seemed no more,
 Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
 But in it there were three tall trees,
 And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
 And by it there were waters flowing,
 And on it there were young flowers growing,
 Of gentle breath and hue.

The fish swam by the castle wall,
 And they seemed joyous each and all:
 The eagle rode the rising blast,
 Methought he never flew so fast
 As then to me he seemed to fly;
 And then new tears came in my eye,
 And I felt troubled—and would fain
 I had not left my recent chain;
 And when I did descend again,
 The darkness of my dim abode
 Fell on me as a heavy load;
 It was as is a new-dug grave,
 Closing o'er one we sought to save,—
 And yet my glance, too much oppressed,
 Had almost need of such a rest.

XIV

It might be months, or years, or days,
 I kept no count, I took no note,
 I had no hope my eyes to raise,
 And clear them of their dreary mote;
 At last men came to set me free;
 I asked not why, and recked not where;
 It was at length the same to me,
 Fettered or fetterless to be,
 I learned to love despair.
 And thus when they appeared at last,
 And all my bonds aside were cast,
 These heavy walls to me had grown
 A hermitage—and all my own!
 And half I felt as they were come
 To tear me from a second home:
 With spiders I had friendship made,
 And watched them in their sullen trade,
 Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
 And why should I feel less than they?
 We were all inmates of one place,
 And I, the monarch of each race,
 Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!
 In quiet we had learned to dwell;
 My very chains and I grew friends,
 So much a long communion tends
 To make us what we are:—even I
 Regained my freedom with a sigh.

TO THOMAS MOORE¹

MY BOAT is on the shore,
And my bark is on the sea;
But, before I go, Tom Moore,
Here's a double health to thee!

Here's a sigh to those who love me,
And a smile to those who hate;
And, whatever sky's above me,
Here's a heart for every fate.

Though the Ocean roar around me,
Yet it still shall bear me on;
Though a desert should surround me,
It hath springs that may be won.

Were't the last drop in the well,
As I gasped upon the brink,
Ere my fainting spirit fell,
'Tis to thee that I would drink.

With that water, as this wine,
The libation I would pour
Should be—peace with thine and mine,
And a health to thee, Tom Moore.

* SO WE'LL GO NO MORE
A-ROVING²

So WE'LL go no more a-roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,
And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And Love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,
And the day returns too soon,
Yet we'll go no more a-roving
By the light of the moon.

TO THOMAS MOORE³

WHAT are you doing now,
Oh Thomas Moore?
What are you doing now,
Oh Thomas Moore?
Sighing or suing now,

¹Written in 1817 (the first stanza in 1816), published in 1821. This poem and the two following ones were all sent in letters to Thomas Moore (1779–1852), Irish poet and wit, and Byron's friend and biographer.

²Written in 1817, published in 1830.

³Written in December, 1816, and published in 1830.

Rhyming or wooing now,
Billing or cooing now,
Which, Thomas Moore?

But the Carnival's coming,
Oh Thomas Moore!
The Carnival's coming,
Oh Thomas Moore!
Masking and humming,
Fifing and drumming,
Guitarring and strumming,
Oh Thomas Moore!

BEPPO :

A VENETIAN STORY⁴

Rosalind. Farewell, Monsieur Traveler: Look you lisp, and wear strange suits: disable all the benefits of your own country; be out of love with your Nativity, and almost chide God for making you that countenance you are; or I will scarce think that you have swam in a *Gondola*.—*As You Like it*, Act IV, Scene 1.

Annotation of the Commentators.

That is, been at *Venice*, which was much visited by the young English gentlemen of those times, and was then what *Paris* is *now*—the seat of all dissoluteness.—S. A.

I

'Tis known, at least it should be, that
throughout

All countries of the Catholic persuasion,
Some weeks before Shrove Tuesday comes
about,⁵

The people take their fill of recreation,

⁴Written in the autumn of 1817, published in 1818. Byron's stimulus to the writing of *Beppo* came from the poem in *ottava rima* known as *Whistlecraft*, by John Hookham Frere, in which this writer attempted to imitate in English the tone and methods of Pulci and his Italian followers. At the time when he read *Whistlecraft* Byron knew little or nothing of Frere's models, but he at once divined the possibilities of this style of writing. He had found, in a word, a form of verse which enabled him to write as he talked, perfectly at his ease, unobstructed by conventions, free to express himself completely. The result was *Beppo*, *The Vision of Judgment*, and *Don Juan*. *Beppo* "is our best, almost our only comic story in verse since Chaucer wrote the tales of the Reeve and the Miller, the Friar and the Summoner. This is high praise, artistically, and Byron's slight, slight story, involved in endless digressions, may seem hardly to deserve it, yet Chaucer could not have bettered . . . the closing stanzas and Laura's welcome to her long-lost husband" (H. J. C. Grierson, Preface to *Poems of Lord Byron*, p. xii).

⁵*I. e.*, in the period just preceding Lent.

And buy repentance, ere they grow devout,
 However high their rank, or low their station,
 With fiddling, feasting, dancing, drinking,
 masking,
 And other things which may be had for asking.

2

The moment night with dusky mantle covers
 The skies (and the more duskily the better),

The time less liked by husbands than by lovers

Begins, and prudery flings aside her fetter;
 And gayety on restless tiptoe hovers,

Giggling with all the gallants who beset her;

And there are songs and quavers, roaring,
 humming,

Guitars, and every other sort of strumming.

3

And there are dresses splendid, but fantastical,

Masks of all times and nations, Turks and Jews,

And harlequins and clowns, with feats gymnastical,

Greeks, Romans, Yankee-doodles, and Hindoos;

All kinds of dress, except the ecclesiastical,

All people, as their fancies hit, may choose,
 But no one in these parts may quiz¹ the clergy,—

Therefore take heed, ye Freethinkers! I charge ye.

4

You'd better walk about begirt with briers,
 Instead of coat and smallclothes,² than put on

A single stitch reflecting upon friars,

Although you swore it only was in fun;

They'd haul you o'er the coals, and stir the fires

Of Phlegethon³ with every mother's son,
 Nor say one mass to cool the caldron's bubble
 That boiled your bones, unless you paid them double.

5

But saving this, you may put on whate'er

You like by way of doublet, cape, or cloak,
 Such as in Monmouth-street,⁴ or in Rag

Fair,

Would rig you out in seriousness or joke;
 And even in Italy such places are,

With prettier name in softer accents spoke,
 For, bating Covent Garden, I can hit on
 No place that's called "Piazza" in Great Britain.

6

This feast is named the Carnival, which being
 Interpreted, implies "farewell to flesh":
 So called, because the name and thing agreeing,

Through Lent they live on fish both salt
 and fresh.

But why they usher Lent with so much glee
 in,

Is more than I can tell, although I guess
 'Tis as we take a glass with friends at parting,
 In the stage-coach or packet, just at starting.

7

And thus they bid farewell to carnal dishes,
 And solid meats, and highly spiced ragouts,⁵

To live for forty days on ill-dressed fishes,
 Because they have no sauces to their stews;

A thing which causes many "poohs" and
 "pishes,"

And several oaths (which would not suit
 the Muse),

From travelers accustomed from a boy
 To eat their salmon, at the least, with soy;⁶

8

And therefore humbly I would recommend
 "The curious in fish-sauce," before they cross

The sea, to bid their cook, or wife, or friend,
 Walk or ride to the Strand, and buy in gross

(Or if set out beforehand, these may send
 By any means least liable to loss)

⁴Noted throughout the eighteenth century as a place for the sale of second-hand clothes.

⁵Highly seasoned stew of meat with vegetables.

⁶Chinese and Japanese sauce for fish made from beans by long fermentation followed by long digestion in brine.

¹Ridicule.

²Knee breeches.

³River of Hades containing fire instead of water.

Ketchup, Soy, Chili-vinegar, and Harvey,
Or, by the Lord! a Lent will well nigh starve
ye;

9

That is to say, if your religion's Roman,
And you at Rome would do as Romans
do,
According to the proverb,—although no
man,
If foreign, is obliged to fast; and you,
If Protestant, or sickly, or a woman,
Would rather dine in sin on a ragout—
Dine and be d—d! I don't mean to be
coarse,
But that's the penalty, to say no worse.

10

Of all the places where the Carnival
Was most facetious in the days of yore,
For dance, and song, and serenade, and
ball,
And masque, and mime, and mystery, and
more
Than I have time to tell now, or at all,
Venice the bell from every city bore,—¹
And at the moment when I fix my story,
That sea-born city was in all her glory.

11

They've pretty faces yet, those same Vene-
tians,
Black eyes, arched brows, and sweet ex-
pressions still;
Such as of old were copied from the Grecians,
In ancient arts by moderns mimicked ill;
And like so many Venuses of Titian's
(The best's at Florence—see it, if ye will),
They look when leaning over the balcony,
Or stepped from out a picture by Giorgione,

12

Whose tints are truth and beauty at their
best;
And when you to Manfrini's palace go,
That picture (however fine the rest)
Is loveliest to my mind of all the show;
It may perhaps be also to *your* zest,
And that's the cause I rhyme upon it so:
'Tis but a portrait of his son; and wife,
And self; but *such* a woman! Love in life!

¹*i.e.*, surpassed every city,

13

Love in full life and length, not love ideal,
No, nor ideal beauty, that fine name,
But something better still, so very real,
That the sweet model must have been the
same,
A thing that you would purchase, beg, or
steal,
Were't not impossible, besides a shame:
The face recalls some face, as 'twere with
pain,
You once have seen, but ne'er will see again;

14

One of those forms which flit by us, when we
Are young, and fix our eyes on every face;
And, oh! the loveliness at times we see
In momentary gliding, the soft grace,
The youth, the bloom, the beauty which
agree,
In many a nameless being we retrace,
Whose course and home we knew not, nor
shall know,
Like the lost Pleiad seen no more below.²

15

I said that like a picture by Giorgione
Venetian women were, and so they *are*,
Particularly seen from a balcony
(For beauty's sometimes best set off afar),
And there, just like a heroine of Goldoni,³
They peep from out the blind, or o'er the
bar;
And truth to say, they're mostly very pretty,
And rather like to show it, more's the pity!

16

For glances beget ogles,⁴ ogles sighs,
Sighs wishes, wishes words, and words a
letter,
Which flies on wings of light-heeled Mer-
curies,
Who do such things because they know no
better;
And then, God knows what mischief may
arise,
When love links two young people in one
fetter,

²The seven Pleiads before being changed into stars were daughters of Atlas. When their metamorphosis took place one of them left her station in the heavens so that she might not behold the ruin of Troy, founded by her son.

³Italian playwright (1707-1793),

⁴Coquettish looks.

Vile assignations, and adulterous beds,
Elopements, broken vows, and hearts, and
heads.

17

Shakespeare described the sex in Desdemona
As very fair, but yet suspect in fame,¹
And to this day from Venice to Verona
Such matters may be probably the same,
Except that since those times was never
known a

Husband whom mere suspicion could in-
flame

To suffocate a wife no more than twenty,
Because she had a "cavalier servente."²

18

Their jealousy (if they are ever jealous)
Is of a fair complexion altogether,
Not like that sooty devil of Othello's,
Which smothers women in a bed of feather,
But worthier of these much more jolly fel-
lows,

When weary of the matrimonial tether
His head for such a wife no mortal bothers,
But takes at once another, or *another's*.

19

Didst ever see a Gondola? For fear
You should not, I'll describe it you ex-
actly:

'Tis a long covered boat that's common
here,
Carved at the prow, built lightly, but com-
pactly,
Rowed by two rowers, each called "Gon-
doler,"

It glides along the water looking blackly,
Just like a coffin clapped in a canoe,
Where none can make out what you say or
do.

20

And up and down the long canals they go,
And under the Rialto³ shoot along,
By night and day, all paces, swift or slow,
And round the theaters, a sable throng,
They wait in their dusk livery of woe,—
But not to them do woeful things belong,

¹See *Othello*, III, iii, 206–208.

²Literally, a serving cavalier; one attentive to a married woman.

³A bridge, as the word is here used; more properly the island to which the bridge leads, on which is situated the Exchange.

For sometimes they contain a deal of fun,
Like mourning coaches when the funeral's
done.

21

But to my story.—'Twas some years ago,
It may be thirty, forty, more or less,
The Carnival was at its height, and so
Were all kinds of buffoonery and dress;
A certain lady went to see the show,

Her real name I know not, nor can guess,
And so we'll call her Laura, if you please,
Because it slips into my verse with ease.

22

She was not old, nor young, nor at the
years

Which certain people call a "*certain age*,"
Which yet the most uncertain age appears,
Because I never heard, nor could engage
A person yet by prayers, or bribes, or tears,
To name, define by speech, or write on
page,

The period meant precisely by that word,—
Which surely is exceedingly absurd.

23

Laura was blooming still, had made the
best

Of time, and time returned the compli-
ment,
And treated her genteelly, so that, dressed,
She looked extremely well where'er she
went;

A pretty woman is a welcome guest,
And Laura's brow a frown had rarely bent;
Indeed, she shone all smiles, and seemed to
flatter

Mankind with her black eyes for looking at
her.

24

She was a married woman; 'tis convenient,
Because in Christian countries 'tis a rule
To view their little slips with eyes more leni-
ent;

Whereas if single ladies play the fool
(Unless within the period intervenient
A well-timed wedding makes the scandal
cool),

I don't know how they ever can get over it,
Except they manage never to discover it.⁴

⁴Never to let it be known.

25

Her husband sailed upon the Adriatic,
 And made some voyages, too, in other
 seas,
 And when he lay in quarantine for pratique¹
 (A forty days' precaution 'gainst disease),
 His wife would mount, at times, her highest
 attic,
 For thence she could discern the ship with
 ease:
 He was a merchant trading to Aleppo,
 His name Giuseppe, called more briefly,
 Beppo.

26

He was a man as dusky as a Spaniard,
 Sunburnt with travel, yet a portly figure;
 Though colored, as it were, within a tan-
 yard,
 He was a person both of sense and vigor—
 A better seaman never yet did man yard;
 And she, although her manners showed no
 rigor,
 Was deemed a woman of the strictest prin-
 ciple,
 So much as to be thought almost invincible.

27

But several years elapsed since they had
 met;
 Some people thought the ship was lost,
 and some
 That he had somehow blundered into debt,
 And did not like the thought of steering
 home;
 And there were several offered any bet,
 Or that he would, or that he would not
 come;
 For most men (till by losing rendered sager)
 Will back their own opinions with a wager.

28

'Tis said that their last parting was pathetic,
 As partings often are, or ought to be,
 And their presentiment was quite prophetic,
 That they should never more each other
 see
 (A sort of morbid feeling, half poetic,
 Which I have known occur in two or
 three),

¹A clean bill of health after quarantine.

When kneeling on the shore upon her sad
 knee
 He left this Adriatic Ariadne.²

29

And Laura waited long, and wept a little,
 And thought of wearing weeds, as well she
 might;
 She almost lost all appetite for victual,
 And could not sleep with ease alone at
 night;
 She deemed the window-frames and shutters
 brittle
 Against a daring housebreaker or sprite,
 And so she thought it prudent to connect her
 With a vice-husband, *chiefly to protect her.*

30

She chose (and what is there they will not
 choose,
 If only you will but oppose their choice?),
 Till Beppo should return from his long cruise,
 And bid once more her faithful heart re-
 joice,
 A man some women like, and yet abuse—
 A coxcomb was he by the public voice;
 A Count of wealth, they said, as well as
 quality,
 And in his pleasures of great liberality.

31

And then he was a Count, and then he knew
 Music, and dancing, fiddling, French and
 Tuscan;
 The last not easy, be it known to you,
 For few Italians speak the right Etruscan.
 He was a critic upon operas, too,
 And knew all niceties of the sock and bus-
 kin;
 And no Venetian audience could endure a
 Song, scene, or air, when he cried "secca-
 tura!"³

32

His "bravo" was decisive, for that sound
 Hushed "Academie" sighed in silent awe;
 The fiddlers trembled as he looked around,
 For fear of some false note's detected flaw;

²Ariadne, daughter of Minos, King of Crete, loved Theseus and gave him the thread which guided him out of the Cretan Labyrinth. After he had been thus aided, however, Theseus deserted her.

³I.e., "It's a bore."

The "prima donna's" tuneful heart would
bound,
Dreading the deep damnation of his
"bah!"

Soprano, basso, even the contra-alto,
Wished him five fathom under the Rialto.

33

He patronized the Improvisatori,¹
Nay, could himself extemporize some
stanzas,
Wrote rhymes, sang songs, could also tell a
story,
Sold pictures, and was skillful in the dance
as
Italians can be, though in this their glory
Must surely yield the palm to that which
France has;
In short, he was a perfect cavaliero,
And to his very valet seemed a hero.

34

Then he was faithful too, as well as amorous;
So that no sort of female could complain,
Although they're now and then a little
clamorous,
He never put the pretty souls in pain;
His heart was one of those which most
enamor us,
Wax to receive, and marble to retain:
He was a lover of the good old school,
Who still become more constant as they cool.

35

No wonder such accomplishments should
turn
A female head, however sage and steady—
With scarce a hope that Beppo could return,
In law he was almost as good as dead, he
Nor sent, nor wrote, nor showed the least
concern,
And she had waited several years already;
And really if a man won't let us know
That he's alive, he's *dead*—or should be so.

36

Besides, within the Alps, to every woman
(Although, God knows, it is a grievous sin),
'Tis, I may say, permitted to have *two* men;
I can't tell who first brought the custom in,

¹Performers who recited or sang verses composed extemporaneously.

But "Cavalier Serventes" are quite common,
And no one notices nor cares a pin;
And we may call this (not to say the worst)
A *second* marriage which corrupts the *first*.

37

The word was formerly a "Cicisbeo,"
But *that* is now grown vulgar and indecent;
The Spaniards call the person a "*Cortejo*,"²
For the same mode subsists in Spain,
though recent;
In short, it reaches from the Po to Teio,³
And may perhaps at last be o'er the sea
sent:
But Heaven preserve Old England from such
courses!
Or what becomes of damage and divorces?

38

However, I still think, with all due deference
To the fair *single* part of the creation,
That married ladies should preserve the preference
In *tête-à-tête* or general conversation—
And this I say without peculiar reference
To England, France, or any other nation—
Because they know the world, and are at
ease,
And being natural, naturally please.

39

'Tis true, your budding Miss is very charming,
But shy and awkward at first coming out,
So much alarmed, that she is quite alarming,
All giggle, blush; half pertness, and half
pout;
And glancing at *Mamma*, for fear there's
harm in
What you, she, it, or they, may be about,
The nursery still lisps out in all they utter—
Besides, they always smell of bread and
butter.

40

But "Cavalier Servente" is the phrase
Used in politest circles to express
This supernumerary slave, who stays
Close to the lady as a part of dress,

²This and *cicisbeo* are, as Byron says, synonymous with *cavalier servente*.

³Teijo, or Tykö, is in Finland.

Her word the only law which he obeys.
His is no sinecure, as you may guess;
Coach, servants, gondola, he goes to call,
And carries fan and tippet,¹ gloves and shawl.

41

With all its sinful doings, I must say,
That Italy's a pleasant place to me,
Who love to see the Sun shine every day,
And vines (not nailed to walls) from tree
to tree
Festooned, much like the back scene of a play,
Or melodrame, which people flock to see,
When the first act is ended by a dance
In vineyards copied from the south of
France.

42

I like on Autumn evenings to ride out,
Without being forced to bid my groom be
sure
My cloak is round his middle strapped about,
Because the skies are not the most secure;
I know too that, if stopped upon my route,
Where the green alleys windingly allure,
Reeling with grapes red wagons choke the
way,—
In England 'twould be dung, dust, or a dray.

43

I also like to dine on becaficas,²
To see the Sun set, sure he'll rise to-
morrow,
Not through a misty morning twinkling
weak as
A drunken man's dead eye in maudlin
sorrow,
But with all Heaven t' himself; the day will
break as
Beauteous as cloudless, nor be forced to
borrow
That sort of farthing candlelight which
glimmers
Where reeking London's smoky caldron sim-
mers.

44

I love the language, that soft bastard Latin,
Which melts like kisses from a female
mouth,
And sounds as if it should be writ on satin,
With syllables which breathe of the sweet
South,

And gentle liquids gliding all so pat in,
That not a single accent seems uncouth,
Like our harsh northern whistling, grunting
guttural,
Which we're obliged to hiss, and spit, and
sputter all.

45

I like the women too (forgive my folly),
From the rich peasant cheek of ruddy
bronze,
And large black eyes that flash on you a
volley
Of rays that say a thousand things at once,
To the high dama's brow, more melancholy,
But clear, and with a wild and liquid
glance,
Heart on her lips, and soul within her eyes,
Soft as her clime, and sunny as her skies.

46

Eve of the land which still is Paradise!
Italian beauty! didst thou not inspire
Raphael, who died in thy embrace, and vies
With all we know of Heaven, or can desire,
In what he hath bequeathed us?—in what
guise,
Though flashing from the fervor of the
lyre,
Would words describe thy past and present
glow,
While yet Canova³ can create below?

47

"England! with all thy faults I love thee
still,"⁴
I said at Calais, and have not forgot it;
I like to speak and lucubrate my fill;
I like the government (but that is not it);
I like the freedom of the press and quill;
I like the Habeas Corpus (when we've
got it);
I like a parliamentary debate,
Particularly when 'tis not too late;

48

I like the taxes, when they're not too many;
I like a seacoal fire, when not too dear;
I like a beef-steak, too, as well as any;
Have no objection to a pot of beer;
I like the weather, when it is not rainy,
That is, I like two months of every year;

¹Scarf for neck and shoulders.

²Song birds, particularly the garden warbler.

³Italian sculptor (1757-1822).

⁴Cowper, *The Task*, Bk. II, l. 206.

And so God save the Regent, Church, and
King!
Which means that I like all and everything.

49

Our standing army, and disbanded seamen,
Poor's rate, Reform, my own, the nation's
debt,
Our little riots just to show we're free men,
Our trifling bankruptcies in the Gazette,
Our cloudy climate, and our chilly women,
All these I can forgive, and those forget,
And greatly venerate our recent glories,
And wish they were not owing to the Tories.

50

But to my tale of Laura,—for I find
Digression is a sin, that by degrees
Becomes exceeding tedious to my mind,
And, therefore, may the reader too dis-
please—
The gentle reader, who may wax unkind,
And caring little for the author's ease,
Insist on knowing what he means, a hard
And hapless situation for a bard.

51

Oh, that I had the art of easy writing
What should be easy reading! could I scale
Parnassus, where the Muses sit inditing
Those pretty poems never known to fail,
How quickly would I print (the world de-
lighting)
A Grecian, Syrian, or Assyrian tale;
And sell you, mixed with western sentiment-
alism,
Some samples of the finest Orientalism.¹

52

But I am but a nameless sort of person,
(A broken Dandy lately on my travels²)
And take for rhyme, to hook my rambling
verse on,
The first that Walker's Lexicon unravels,
And when I can't find that, I put a worse
on,
Not caring as I ought for critics' cavils;
I've half a mind to tumble down to prose,
But verse is more in fashion—so here goes!

¹This, of course, Byron had done immediately after the success of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*.

²The allusion is to *Childe Harold*.

53

The Count and Laura made their new ar-
rangement,
Which lasted, as arrangements sometimes
do,
For half a dozen years without estrange-
ment;
They had their little differences, too;
Those jealous whiffs, which never any change
meant;
In such affairs there probably are few
Who have not had this pouting sort of
squabble,
From sinners of high station to the rabble.

54

But, on the whole, they were a happy pair,
As happy as unlawful love could make
them;
The gentleman was fond, the lady fair,
Their chains so slight, 'twas not worth
while to break them;
The world beheld them with indulgent air;
The pious only wished "the devil take
them!"
He took them not; he very often waits,
And leaves old sinners to be young ones'
baits.

55

But they were young; Oh! what without
our youth
Would love be! What would youth be
without love!
Youth lends it joy, and sweetness, vigor,
truth,
Heart, soul, and all that seems as from
above;
But, languishing with years, it grows un-
couth—
One of few things experience don't im-
prove,
Which is, perhaps, the reason why old fel-
lows
Are always so preposterously jealous.

56

It was the Carnival, as I have said
Some six and thirty stanzas back, and
so
Laura the usual preparations made,
Which you do when your mind's made up
to go

To-night to Mrs. Boehm's masquerade,¹
Spectator, or partaker in the show;
The only difference known between the
cases
Is—*here*, we have six weeks of "varnished
faces."²

57

Laura, when dressed, was (as I sang be-
fore)

A pretty woman as was ever seen,
Fresh as the Angel o'er a new inn door,
Or frontispiece of a new Magazine,
With all the fashions which the last month
wore,

Colored, and silver paper leaved between
That and the title-page, for fear the press
Should soil with parts of speech the parts
of dress.

58

They went to the Ridotto;—'tis a hall
Where people dance, and sup, and dance
again;

Its proper name, perhaps, were a masked
ball,

But that's of no importance to my strain;
'Tis (on a smaller scale) like our Vauxhall,

Excepting that it can't be spoiled by rain;
The company is "mixed" (the phrase I
quote is

As much as saying they're below your no-
tice);

59

For a "mixed company" implies that,
save

Yourselves and friends, and half a hundred
more,

Whom you may bow to without looking
grave,

The rest are but a vulgar set, the bore
Of public places, where they basely brave

The fashionable stare of twenty score
Of well-bred persons, called "*The World*";
but I,

Although I know them, really don't know
why.

¹This event was reported in the *Morning Chronicle* of 17 June, 1817. "On Monday evening this distinguished lady of the *haut ton* gave a splendid masquerade at her residence in St. James's Square," etc.

²*I.e.*, of masking.

60

This is the case in England; at least was
During the dynasty of Dandies,³ now
Perchance succeeded by some other class
Of imitated imitators:—how
Irreparably soon decline, alas!

The demagogues of fashion: all below
Is frail, how easily the world is lost
By love, or war, and, now and then—by
frost!

61

Crushed was Napoleon by the northern
Thor,⁴

Who knocked his army down with icy
hammer,

Stopped by the *elements*, like a whaler, or
A blundering novice in his new French
grammar;

Good cause had he to doubt the chance of war,
And as for Fortune—but I dare not d—n
her,

Because, were I to ponder to infinity,
The more I should believe in her divinity.

62

She rules the present, past, and all to be yet,
She gives us luck in lotteries, love, and
marriage;

I cannot say that she's done much for me yet;
Not that I mean her bounties to disparage,
We've not yet closed accounts, and we shall
see yet

How much she'll make amends for past
miscarriage;

Meantime the Goddess I'll no more impor-
tune,

Unless to thank her when she's made my
fortune.

63

To turn,—and to return;—the devil take it!
This story slips for ever through my
fingers,

Because, just as the stanza likes to make it,
It needs must be, and so it rather lingers:
This form of verse began, I can't well break
it,

But must keep time and tune like public
singers;

³It extended from about 1813 to 1830. Cf. Bk. III, chaps. ix-x, of Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, and notes, below.

⁴*I.e.*, in his Russian campaign and disastrous winter retreat from Moscow.

But if I once get through my present measure,
I'll take another when I'm next at leisure.

64

They went to the Ridotto ('tis a place
To which I mean to go myself to-morrow,
Just to divert my thoughts a little space,
Because I'm rather hippish,¹ and may borrow
Some spirits, guessing at what kind of face
May lurk beneath each mask; and as my sorrow
Slackens its pace sometimes, I'll make, or find,
Something shall leave it half an hour behind).

65

Now Laura moves along the joyous crowd,
Smiles in her eyes, and simpers on her lips;
To some she whispers, others speaks aloud;
To some she curtsies, and to some she dips,
Complains of warmth, and this complaint avowed,
Her lover brings the lemonade, she sips;
She then surveys, condemns, but pities still
Her dearest friends for being dressed so ill.

66

One has false curls, another too much paint,
A third—where did she buy that frightful turban?
A fourth's so pale she fears she's going to faint,
A fifth's look's vulgar, dowdyish, and suburban,
A sixth's white silk has got a yellow taint,
A seventh's thin muslin surely will be her bane,
And lo! an eighth appears,—“I'll see no more!”
For fear, like Banquo's kings,² they reach a score.

67

Meantime, while she was thus at others gazing,
Others were leveling their looks at her;
She heard the men's half-whispered mode of praising,
And, till 'twas done, determined not to stir;

¹Colloquial, for hypochondriac.²*Macbeth*, IV, i.

The women only thought it quite amazing
That, at her time of life, so many were Admirers still,—but “Men are so debased,
Those brazen creatures always suit their taste.”

68

For my part, now, I ne'er could understand
Why naughty women—but I won't discuss
A thing which is a scandal to the land,
I only don't see why it should be thus;
And if I were but in a gown and band,
Just to entitle me to make a fuss,
I'd preach on this till Wilberforce and Romilly³
Should quote in their next speeches from my homily.

69

While Laura thus was seen, and seeing, smiling,
Talking, she knew not why, and cared not what,
So that her female friends, with envy broiling,
Beheld her airs and triumph, and all that;
And well-dressed males still kept before her filing,
And passing bowed and mingled with her chat;
More than the rest one person seemed to stare
With pertinacity that's rather rare.

70

He was a Turk, the color of mahogany;
And Laura saw him, and at first was glad,
Because the Turks so much admire phillogny,⁴
Although their usage of their wives is sad;
'Tis said they use no better than a dog any
Poor woman, whom they purchase like a pad;⁵
They have a number, though they ne'er exhibit 'em,
Four wives by law, and concubines “ad libitum.”⁶

³William Wilberforce (1759–1833), statesman and supporter of the anti-slavery cause, and Sir Samuel Romilly (1757–1818), philanthropist and criminal-law reformer.⁴Fondness for women.⁵An easy-paced horse.⁶As many as they please.

71

They lock them up, and veil, and guard them daily,
 They scarcely can behold their male relations,
 So that their moments do not pass so gaily
 As is supposed the case with northern nations;
 Confinement, too, must make them look quite palely;
 And as the Turks abhor long conversations,
 Their days are either passed in doing nothing,
 Or bathing, nursing, making love, and clothing.

72

They cannot read, and so don't lisp in criticism;
 Nor write, and so they don't affect the muse;
 Were never caught in epigram or witticism,
 Have no romances, sermons, plays, reviews,—
 In harams learning soon would make a pretty schism,
 But luckily these beauties are no "Blues";¹
 No bustling Botherbys² have they to show 'em
 "That charming passage in the last new poem":

73

No solemn, antique gentleman of rhyme,
 Who having angled all his life for fame,
 And getting but a nibble at a time,
 Still fussily keeps fishing on, the same
 Small "Triton of the minnows," the sub-lime
 Of mediocrity, the furious tame,
 The echo's echo, usher of the school
 Of female wits, boy bards—in short, a fool!

¹Bluestockings, literary or learned ladies.

²This stands for William Sotheby (1757-1833), a poet and patron of men of letters. Byron had mentioned him with approbation in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, but later disliked him because he thought Sotheby had anonymously attacked his poetry. His final conclusion about Sotheby, however, was, "a good man, rhymes well (if not wisely); but is a bore."

74

A stalking oracle of awful phrase,
 The approving "Good!" (by no means good in law),
 Humming like flies around the newest blaze,
 The bluest of bluebottles you e'er saw,
 Teasing with blame, excruciating with praise,
 Gorging the little fame he gets all raw,
 Translating tongues he knows not even by letter,
 And sweating plays so middling, bad were better.

75

One hates an author that's *all author*, fellows
 In foolscap uniforms turned up with ink,
 So very anxious, clever, fine, and jealous,
 One don't know what to say to them, or think,
 Unless to puff them with a pair of bellows;
 Of coxcomby's worst coxcombs e'en the pink
 Are preferable to these shreds of paper,
 These unquenched snuffings of the midnight taper.

76

Of these same we see several, and of others,
 Men of the world, who know the world like men,
 Scott, Rogers,³ Moore, and all the better brothers,
 Who think of something else besides the pen;
 But for the children of the "mighty mother's,"
 The would-be wits, and can't-be gentlemen,
 I leave them to their daily "tea is ready,"
 Smug coterie, and literary lady.

77

The poor dear Mussulwomen⁴ whom I mention
 Have none of these instructive pleasant people,
 And *one* would seem to them a new invention,
 Unknown as bells within a Turkish steeple;
 I think 'twould almost be worth while to pension
 (Though best-sown projects very often reap ill)

³Samuel Rogers, banker and poet (1763-1855).

⁴Mahometan women.

A missionary author, just to preach
Our Christian usage of the parts of speech.

78

No chemistry for them unfolds her gases,
No metaphysics are let loose in lectures,
No circulating library amasses
Religious novels, moral tales, and strictures
Upon the living manners, as they pass us;
No exhibition glares with annual pictures;
They stare not on the stars from out their attics,
Nor deal (thank God for that!) in mathematics.

79

Why I thank God for that is no great matter,
I have my reasons, you no doubt suppose,
And as, perhaps, they would not highly flatter,
I'll keep them for my life (to come) in prose;
I fear I have a little turn for satire,
And yet methinks the older that one grows
Inclines us more to laugh than scold, though laughter
Leaves us so doubly serious shortly after.

80

Oh, mirth and innocence! Oh, milk and water!
Ye happy mixtures of more happy days!
In these sad centuries of sin and slaughter,
Abominable Man no more allays
His thirst with such pure beverage. No matter,
I love you both, and both shall have my praise:
Oh, for old Saturn's reign of sugar-candy!¹—
Meantime I drink to your return in brandy.

81

Our Laura's Turk still kept his eyes upon her,
Less in the Mussulman than Christian way,
Which seems to say, "Madam, I do you honor,
And while I please to stare, you'll please to stay."

¹Saturn (or Cronus) was a Titan and his reign, which lasted until he was displaced by his son Zeus, coincided with the Golden Age of innocence, peace, and plenty.

Could staring win a woman, this had won her,

But Laura could not thus be led astray;
She had stood fire too long and well, to boggle
Even at this stranger's most outlandish ogle.

82

The morning now was on the point of breaking,
A turn of time at which I would advise
Ladies who have been dancing, or partaking
In any other kind of exercise,
To make their preparations for forsaking
The ball-room ere the sun begins to rise,
Because when once the lamps and candles fail,
His blushes make them look a little pale.

83

I've seen some balls and revels in my time,
And stayed them over for some silly reason,
And then I looked (I hope it was no crime)
To see what lady best stood out the season,
And though I've seen some thousands in their prime,
Lovely and pleasing, and who still may please on,
I never saw but one (the stars withdrawn)
Whose bloom could after dancing dare the dawn.

84

The name of this Aurora I'll not mention,
Although I might, for she was nought to me
More than that patent work of God's invention,
A charming woman, whom we like to see;
But writing names would merit reprehension,
Yet if you like to find out this fair *she*,
At the next London or Parisian ball
You still may mark her cheek out-blooming all.

85

Laura, who knew it would not do at all
To meet the daylight after seven hours' sitting
Among three thousand people at a ball,
To make her curtsy thought it right and fitting;
The Count was at her elbow with her shawl,
And they the room were on the point of quitting,

When lo! those curséd gondoliers had got
Just in the very place where they *should not*.

86

In this they're like our coachmen, and the
cause

Is much the same—the crowd, and pulling,
hauling,
With blasphemies enough to break their
jaws,

They make a never intermitted bawling.
At home, our Bow-street gemmen¹ keep the
laws,

And here a sentry stands within your call-
ing;

But for all that, there is a deal of swearing,
And nauseous words past mentioning or
bearing.

87

The Count and Laura found their boat at
last,

And homeward floated o'er the silent tide,
Discussing all the dances gone and past;

The dancers and their dresses, too, beside;
Some little scandals eke; but all aghast

(As to their palace-stairs the rowers glide)
Sat Laura by the side of her adorer,

When lo! the Mussulman was there before
her.

88

"Sir," said the Count, with brow exceeding
grave,

"Your unexpected presence here will make
It necessary for myself to crave

Its import? But perhaps 'tis a mistake;
I hope it is so; and, at once to waive

All compliment, I hope so for *your* sake;
You understand my meaning, or you *shall*."

"Sir" (quoth the Turk), "'tis no mistake at
all;

89

"That lady is *my wife*!" Much wonder
paints

The lady's changing cheek, as well it might;
But where an Englishwoman sometimes
faints,

Italian females don't do so outright;

They only call a little on their saints,
And then come to themselves, almost or
quite;

¹Cockney "gentlemen."

Which saves much hartshorn, salts, and
sprinkling faces,
And cutting stays, as usual in such cases.

90

She said,—what could she say? Why, not
a word;

But the Count courteously invited in
The stranger, much appeased by what he
heard:

"Such things, perhaps, we'd best discuss
within,"

Said he; "don't let us make ourselves ab-
surd

In public, by a scene, nor raise a din,
For then the chief and only satisfaction
Will be much quizzing on the whole trans-
action."

91

They entered, and for coffee called—it came,
A beverage for Turks and Christians
both,

Although the way they make it's not the
same.

Now Laura, much recovered, or less loath
To speak, cries "Beppo! what's your pagan
name?"

Bless me! your beard is of amazing growth!
And how came you to keep away so long?
Are you not sensible 'twas very wrong?

92

"And are you *really, truly*, now a Turk?

With any other women did you wive?

Is't true they use their fingers for a fork?

Well, that's the prettiest shawl—as I'm
alive!

You'll give it me? They say you eat no
pork.

And how so many years did you contrive
To—Bless me! did I ever? No, I never
Saw a man grown so yellow! How's your
liver?

93

"Beppo! that beard of yours becomes you
not;

It shall be shaved before you're a day
older:

Why do you wear it? Oh! I had forgot—
Pray don't you think the weather here is
colder?

How do I look? You sha'n't stir from this spot

In that queer dress, for fear that some beholder

Should find you out, and make the story known.

How short your hair is! Lord! how gray it's grown!"

94

What answer Beppo made to these demands

Is more than I know. He was cast away

About where Troy stood once, and nothing stands;

Became a slave of course, and for his pay Had bread and bastinadoes, till some bands

Of pirates landing in a neighboring bay,

He joined the rogues and prospered, and became

A renegado of indifferent fame.

95

But he grew rich, and with his riches grew so

Keen the desire to see his home again,

He thought himself in duty bound to do so, And not be always thieving on the main;¹

Lonely he felt, at times, as Robin Crusoe,

And so he hired a vessel come from Spain,

Bound for Corfu: she was a fine polacca,²

Manned with twelve hands, and laden with tobacco.

96

Himself, and much (Heaven knows how gotten!) cash,

He then embarked, with risk of life and limb,

And got clear off, although the attempt was rash;

He said that *Providence* protected him—

For my part, I say nothing—lest we clash

In our opinions:—well, the ship was trim,

¹On the high seas.

²Three-masted merchant vessel of the Mediterranean.

Set sail, and kept her reckoning fairly on, Except three days of calm when off Cape Bonn.³

97

They reached the island, he transferred his lading

And self and live stock to another bottom, And passed for a true Turkey-merchant, trading

With goods of various names, but I've forgot 'em.

However, he got off by this evading,

Or else the people would perhaps have shot him;

And thus at Venice landed to reclaim

His wife, religion, house, and Christian name.

98

His wife received, the Patriarch re-baptized him

(He made the church a present, by the way);

He then threw off the garments which disguised him,

And borrowed the Count's smallclothes for a day:

His friends the more for his long absence prized him,

Finding he'd wherewithal to make them gay,

With dinners, where he oft became the laugh of them,

For stories—but *I* don't believe the half of them.

99

Whate'er his youth had suffered, his old age With wealth and talking made him some amends;

Though Laura sometimes put him in a rage, I've heard the Count and he were always friends.

My pen is at the bottom of a page, Which being finished, here the story ends;

'Tis to be wished it had been sooner done, But stories somehow lengthen when begun.

³The northernmost point of Tunis.

DON JUAN¹

CANTO III

THE ISLES OF GREECE

I

THE isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!

Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,

Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung!²
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set.

II

The Scian and the Teian muse,³

The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
Have found the fame your shores refuse:

Their place of birth alone is mute
To sounds which echo further west
Than your sires' "Islands of the Blest."⁴

¹Written at intervals from 1818 to 1823 and published in 1819-1824, save for a fragment—the unfinished seventeenth canto—published in 1903. Byron took the name of his hero from a Spanish traditional story concerning the libertinism of one Don Juan Tenorio. But he took little more than the name, practically disregarding both the original Spanish dramatization of the story and the later French and Italian adaptations. When he had finished the first canto Byron wrote to Moore that his new poem was "meant to be a little quietly facetious upon everything." It was that—and more. For, as Byron went on, the work grew upon him and developed into a satirical picture of European aristocracy and politics. When he had completed the fifth canto he wrote to Murray, his publisher: "The 5th is so far from being the last of *D. J.* that it is hardly the beginning. I meant to take him the tour of Europe, with a proper mixture of siege, battle, and adventure, and to make him finish as Anacharsis Cloots in the French Revolution [who was executed in 1794]. To how many cantos this may extend, I know not, nor whether (even if I live) I shall complete it; but this was my notion: I meant to have him a Cavalier Servente in Italy, and a cause for a divorce in England, and a Sentimental "Werther-faced man" in Germany, so as to show the different ridicules of the society in each of those countries, and to have displayed him gradually *gâté* and *blasé* [growing tainted and dulled] as he grew older, as is natural. But I had not quite fixed whether to make him end in Hell, or in an unhappy marriage, not knowing which would be the severest. The Spanish tradition says Hell: but it is probably only an Allegory of the other state." In pursuance of this sufficiently elastic plan Byron wrote sixteen cantos, and had begun a seventeenth before he died, leaving the poem unfinished. The passages from the third and fourth cantos here printed are not sufficient to give any fair idea of the variety, the buoyancy, the largeness and force, and the human truth of *Don Juan*. They are justly famous passages, however, and within their

III

The mountains look on Marathon⁵—

And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dreamed that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

IV

A king⁶ sat on the rocky brow

Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,

And men in nations;—all were his!
He counted them at break of day—
And when the sun set where were they?

V

And where are they? and where art thou,
My country? On thy voiceless shore

The heroic lay is tuneless now—

The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

VI

'Tis something, in the dearth of fame,

Though linked among a fettered race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,

Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear.

VII

Must *we* but weep o'er days more blest?

Must *we* but blush?—Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast

A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylæ!⁷

limits may at least serve to illustrate some of the salient characteristics of the poem.

²Delos was said to have risen from the waves of the Ægean and to have been the birthplace of Phœbus Apollo.

³Homer, said to have been born on the island of Scio, and Anacreon, in Teos, Asia Minor.

⁴Mythical islands said to lie in the "Western Ocean," where those favored of the gods dwelt in happiness after death.

⁵The plain where the Greeks under Miltiades defeated the Persians.

⁶Xerxes, King of Persia, whose fleet was defeated by the Greeks in the battle of Salamis.

⁷The mountain pass where three hundred Spartans heroically opposed the advance of Xerxes' army.

VIII

What, silent still? and silent all?

Ah! no;—the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, "Let one living head,
But one arise,—we come, we come!"
Tis but the living who are dumb.

IX

In vain—in vain: strike other chords;
Fill high the cup with Samian wine!¹
Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
And shed the blood of Scio's vine!
Hark! rising to the ignoble call—
How answers each bold Bacchanal!

X

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet;
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?²
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?
You have the letters Cadmus³ gave—
Think ye he meant them for a slave?

XI

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
We will not think of themes like these!
It made Anacreon's song divine:
He served—but served Polycrates—
A tyrant; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

XII

The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
Oh! that the present hour would lend
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

XIII

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,⁴
Exists the remnant of a line
Such as the Doric mothers bore;
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood⁵ might own.

XIV

Trust not for freedom to the Franks—
They have a king who buys and sells;
In native swords, and native ranks,
The only hope of courage dwells:
But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
Would break your shield, however broad.

XV

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
Our virgins dance beneath the shade—
I see their glorious black eyes shine;
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

XVI

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
There, swan-like, let me sing and die:
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine—
Dash down your cup of Samian wine!

87

Thus sung, or would, or could, or should have
sung,
The modern Greek, in tolerable verse;⁶
If not like Orpheus quite, when Greece was
young,
Yet in these times he might have done
much worse:
His strain displayed some feeling—right or
wrong;
And feeling, in a poet, is the source
Of others' feeling; but they are such liars,
And take all colors—like the hands of dyers.

88

But words are things, and a small drop of ink,
Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps mil-
lions, think;
'Tis strange, the shortest letter which man
uses
Instead of speech, may form a lasting link
Of ages; to what straits old Time reduces

⁶Juan, surviving shipwreck, had found himself on an island where lived Haidée, the daughter of a pirate, Lambro, who then was at sea. Juan and Haidée had fallen in love with each other and, supposing Lambro dead, were expending his treasures in feasting and revelry. One of Haidée's retinue was a poet, who is described in stanzas immediately preceding *The Isles of Greece*, and who "thus sung, or would, or could, or should have sung."

¹Anacreon, the poet of love and wine, lived at Samos.

²The former an ancient war dance, the latter a military formation used by Pyrrhus.

³A legendary figure reputed to have introduced the alphabet into Greece from Phœnicia.

⁴Places in Albania.

⁵The blood of Hercules.

Frail man, when paper—even a rag like this,
Survives himself, his tomb, and all that's his!

89

And when his bones are dust, his grave a
blank,

His station, generation, even his nation,
Become a thing, or nothing, save to rank

In chronological commemoration,
Some dull MS. oblivion long has sank,
Or graven stone found in a barrack's
station

In digging the foundation of a closet,
May turn his name up, as a rare deposit.

90

And glory long has made the sages smile;
'Tis something, nothing, words, illusion,
wind—

Depending more upon the historian's style
Than on the name a person leaves behind:
Troy owes to Homer what whist owes to
Hoyle:¹

The present century was growing blind
To the great Marlborough's skill in giving
knocks,
Until his late Life by Archdeacon Coxe.²

91

Milton's the prince of poets—so we say;
A little heavy, but no less divine:
An independent being in his day—

Learned, pious, temperate in love and
wine;

But his life falling into Johnson's way,³
We're told this great high priest of all the
Nine⁴

Was whipped at college—a harsh sire—odd
spouse,
For the first Mrs. Milton left his house.

92

All these are, *certainly*, entertaining facts,
Like Shakespeare's stealing deer, Lord
Bacon's bribes;
Like Titus's youth, and Cæsar's earliest
acts;

¹Edmund Hoyle (1672–1769).

²William Coxe (1747–1828) published his *Life of the victor of Blenheim* in 1817–1819.

³When Johnson was writing his *Lives of the English Poets*.

⁴The Nine Muses.

⁵Titus Vespasianus, who as a youth learned the art of forgery.

Like Burns (whom Doctor Currie well
describes);

Like Cromwell's pranks;—but although
truth exacts

These amiable descriptions from the
scribes,

As most essential to their hero's story,
They do not much contribute to his glory.

93

All are not moralists, like Southey, when
He prated to the world of "Pantisoc-
rasy";⁶

Or Wordsworth unexcised, unhired, who
then

Seasoned his peddler poems with democ-
racy;

Or Coleridge, long before his flighty pen
Let to the Morning Post its aristocracy;
When he and Southey, following the same
path,
Espoused two partners (milliners of Bath).

94

Such names at present cut a convict figure,
The very Botany Bay⁷ in moral geography;
Their loyal treason, renegado rigor,
Are good manure for their more bare
biography;

Wordsworth's last quarto, by the way, is
bigger

Than any since the birthday of typography;
A drowsy, frowzy poem, called the "Excur-
sion,"

Writ in a manner which is my aversion.

95

He there builds up a formidable dyke
Between his own and others' intellect;
But Wordsworth's poem, and his followers,
like

Joanna Southcote's Shiloh⁸ and her sect,
Are things which in this century don't strike
The public mind,—so few are the elect;

⁶See the introductory note prefixed to Coleridge's poems, above. Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge all were believers in democracy in their youth but became more conservative in their views as they grew older.

⁷Australian penal colony.

⁸She had prophesied that on 19 October, 1814, she would give birth to a second Shilo, or Messiah. This she failed to do, and shortly afterwards she died of dropsy.

And the new births of both their stale virginities
Have proved but dropsies, taken for divinities.

96

But let me to my story: I must own,
If I have any fault, it is digression,
Leaving my people to proceed alone,
While I soliloquize beyond expression:
But these are my addresses from the throne,
Which put off business to the ensuing session:
Forgetting each omission is a loss to
The world, not quite so great as Ariosto.

97

I know that what our neighbors call "*longueurs*,"¹
(We've not so good a word, but have the thing,
In that complete perfection which insures
An epic from Bob Southey every spring—)
Form not the true temptation which allures
The reader; but 'twould not be hard to bring
Some fine examples of the *épopée*,²
To prove its grand ingredient is *ennui*.

98

We learn from Horace, "Homer sometimes sleeps";³
We feel without him, Wordsworth sometimes wakes,—
To show with what complacency he creeps,
With his dear "*Wagoners*," around his lakes.
He wishes for "a boat" to sail the deeps—
Of ocean?—No, of air; and then he makes
Another outcry for "a little boat,"⁴
And drivels seas to set it well afloat.

99

If he must fain sweep o'er the ethereal plain,
And Pegasus runs restive in his "Wagon,"
Could he not beg the loan of Charles's Wain?⁵

Or pray Medea for a single dragon?
Or if, too classic for his vulgar brain,
He feared his neck to venture such a nag on,

¹Tedious things. ²Epic poem. ³*Ars Poetica*, l. 359.

⁴See the opening stanza of *Peter Bell*.

⁵Charles's wagon, the constellation also known as the Dipper.

And he must needs mount nearer to the moon,
Could not the blockhead ask for a balloon?

100

"Peddlers," and "Boats," and "Wagons"!
Oh! ye shades
Of Pope and Dryden, are we come to this?
That trash of such sort not alone evades
Contempt, but from the bathos' vast abyss
Floats scumlike uppermost, and these Jack
Cades
Of sense and song above your graves may hiss—
The "little boatman" and his "Peter Bell"
Can sneer at him who drew "Achitophel"!

101

T' our tale.—The feast was over, the slaves gone,
The dwarfs and dancing girls had all retired;
The Arab lore and poet's song were done,
And every sound of revelry expired,
The lady and her lover, left alone,
The rosy flood of twilight's sky admired;—
Ave Maria! o'er the earth and sea,
That heavenliest hour of Heaven is worthiest thee!

102

Ave Maria! blesséd be the hour!
The time, the clime, the spot, where I so oft
Have felt that moment in its fullest power
Sink o'er the earth so beautiful and soft,
While swung the deep bell in the distant tower,
Or the faint dying day-hymn stole aloft,
And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
And yet the forest leaves seemed stirred with prayer.

103

Ave Maria! 'tis the hour of prayer!
Ave Maria! 'tis the hour of love!
Ave Maria! may our spirits dare
Look up to thine and to thy Son's above!
Ave Maria! oh that face so fair!
Those downcast eyes beneath the Almighty Dove—
What though 'tis but a pictured image?—
strike —
That painting is no idol,—'tis too like.

104

Some kinder casuists are pleased to say,
 In nameless print—that I have no devotion;
 But set those persons down with me to pray,
 And you shall see who has the properest notion
 Of getting into heaven the shortest way;
 My altars are the mountains and the ocean,
 Earth, air, stars,—all that springs from the great Whole,
 Who hath produced, and will receive the soul.

105

Sweet hour of twilight!—in the solitude
 Of the pine forest, and the silent shore
 Which bounds Ravenna's immemorial wood,
 Rooted where once the Adrian wave flowed o'er,
 To where the last Cæsarean fortress stood,
 Evergreen forest! which Boccaccio's lore
 And Dryden's lay¹ made haunted ground to me,
 How have I loved the twilight hour and thee!

106

The shrill cicalas, people of the pine,
 Making their summer lives one ceaseless song,
 Were the sole echoes, save my steed's and mine,
 And vesper bell's that rose the boughs along;
 The specter huntsman of Onesti's² line,
 His hell-dogs, and their chase, and the fair throng
 Which learned from this example not to fly
 From a true lover,—shadowed my mind's eye.

107

Oh, Hesperus! thou bringest all good things—
 Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer,
 To the young bird the parent's brooding wings,
 The welcome stall to the o'erlabored steer;

Whate'er of peace about our hearthstone clings,
 Whate'er our household gods protect of dear,
 Are gathered round us by thy look of rest;
 Thou bring'st the child, too, to the mother's breast.

108

Soft hour! which wakes the wish and melts the heart
 Of those who sail the seas, on the first day
 When they from their sweet friends are torn apart;
 Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way
 As the far bell of vesper makes him start,
 Seeming to weep the dying day's decay;
 Is this a fancy which our reason scorns?
 Ah! surely nothing dies but something mourns!

CANTO IV

12

“Whom the gods love die young” was said of yore,³
 And many deaths do they escape by this:
 The death of friends, and that which slays even more—
 The death of friendship, love, youth, all that is,
 Except mere breath; and since the silent shore
 Awaits at last even those who longest miss
 The old archer's shafts, perhaps the early grave
 Which men weep over may be meant to save.

13

Haidée and Juan thought not of the dead.
 The heavens, and earth, and air, seemed made for them:
 They found no fault with Time, save that he fled;
 They saw not in themselves aught to condemn;
 Each was the other's mirror, and but read
 Joy sparkling in their dark eyes like a gem,
 And knew such brightness was but the reflection
 Of their exchanging glances of affection.

¹Dryden's *Theodore and Honoria* is an adaptation of the eighth tale of the fifth day of Boccaccio's *Decameron*.

²Dryden's *Theodore* is Boccaccio's *Onesti*.

³The statement is found among the fragments of Menander, in Plautus's *Bacchides*, IV, vii, 18-19, and elsewhere.

14

The gentle pressure, and the thrilling touch,
The least glance better understood than
words,
Which still said all, and ne'er could say too
much;

A language, too, but like to that of birds,
Known but to them, at least appearing such
As but to lovers a true sense affords;
Sweet playful phrases, which would seem
absurd

To those who have ceased to hear such, or
ne'er heard.

15

All these were theirs, for they were children
still,

And children still they should have ever
been;

They were not made in the real world to fill
A busy character in the dull scene,

But like two beings born from out a rill,

A nymph and her belovéd, all unseen
To pass their lives in fountains and on flow-
ers,

And never know the weight of human hours.

16

Moons changing had rolled on, and change-
less found

Those their bright rise had lighted to such
joys

As rarely they beheld throughout their
round;

And these were not of the vain kind which
cloys,

For theirs were buoyant spirits, never bound
By the mere senses; and that which de-
stroys

Most love, possession, unto them appeared
A thing which each endearment more en-
deared.

17

Oh beautiful! and rare as beautiful!

But theirs was love in which the mind
delights

To lose itself, when the old world grows dull,
And we are sick of its hack sounds and
sights,

Intrigues, adventures of the common school,
Its petty passions, marriages, and flights,

Where Hymen's torch but brands one strum-
pet more,

Whose husband only knows her not a whore.

18

Hard words—harsh truth! a truth which
many know.

Enough.—The faithful and the fairy pair,
Who never found a single hour too slow,

What was it made them thus exempt from
care?

Young innate feelings all have felt below,
Which perish in the rest, but in them were

Inherent—what we mortals call romantic,
And always envy, though we deem it frantic.

19

This is in others a factitious state,

An opium dream of too much youth and
reading,

But was in them their nature or their fate:
No novels e'er had set their young hearts
bleeding,

For Haidée's knowledge was by no means
great,

And Juan was a boy of saintly breeding;
So that there was no reason for their loves

More than for those of nightingales or doves.

20

They gazed upon the sunset; 'tis an hour
Dear unto all, but dearest to *their* eyes,

For it had made them what they were: the
power

Of love had first o'erwhelmed them from
such skies,

When happiness had been their only dower,
And twilight saw them linked in passion's
ties;

Charmed with each other, all things charmed
that brought

The past still welcome as the present thought.

21

I know not why, but in that hour to-night,
Even as they gazed, a sudden tremor
came,

And swept, as 'twere, across their hearts'
delight,

Like the wind o'er a harp-string, or a
flame,

When one is shook in sound, and one in sight:
And thus some boding flashed through
either frame,

And called from Juan's breast a faint low
sigh,

While one new tear arose in Haidée's eye.

22

That large black prophet eye seemed to dilate
 And follow far the disappearing sun,
 As if their last day of a happy date
 With his broad, bright, and dropping orb
 were gone.
 Juan gazed on her as to ask his fate—
 He felt a grief, but knowing cause for
 none,
 His glance inquired of hers for some excuse
 For feelings causeless, or at least abstruse.

23

She turned to him, and smiled, but in that
 sort
 Which makes not others smile; then turned
 aside:
 Whatever feeling shook her, it seemed short,
 And mastered by her wisdom or her pride;
 When Juan spoke, too—it might be in
 sport—
 Of this their mutual feeling, she replied—
 "If it should be so,—but—it cannot be—
 Or I at least shall not survive to see."

24

Juan would question further, but she pressed
 His lips to hers, and silenced him with this,
 And then dismissed the omen from her
 breast,
 Defying augury with that fond kiss;
 And no doubt of all methods 'tis the best:
 Some people prefer wine—'tis not amiss;
 I have tried both; so those who would a part
 take
 May choose between the headache and the
 heartache.

25

One of the two, according to your choice,
 Woman or wine, you'll have to under-
 go;
 Both maladies are taxes on our joys:
 But which to choose, I really hardly know;
 And if I had to give a casting voice,
 For both sides I could many reasons show,
 And then decide, without great wrong to
 either,
 It were much better to have both than
 neither.

26

Juan and Haidée gazed upon each other
 With swimming looks of speechless tender-
 ness,
 Which mixed all feelings, friend, child, lover,
 brother;
 All that the best can mingle and express
 When two pure hearts are poured in one
 another,
 And love too much, and yet cannot love
 less;
 But almost sanctify the sweet excess
 By the immortal wish and power to bless.

27

Mixed in each other's arms, and heart in
 heart,
 Why did they not then die?—they had
 lived too long
 Should an hour come to bid them breathe
 apart;
 Years could but bring them cruel things or
 wrong;
 The world was not for them, nor the world's
 art
 For beings passionate as Sappho's song;
 Love was born *with* them, *in* them, so intense,
 It was their very spirit—not a sense.

28

They should have lived together deep in
 woods,
 Unseen as sings the nightingale; they were
 unfit to mix in these thick solitudes
 Called social, haunts of hate, and vice,
 and care;
 How lonely every freeborn creature broods!
 The sweetest song-birds nestle in a pair;
 The eagle soars alone; the gull and crow
 Flock o'er their carrion, just like men below.

29

Now pillowed cheek to cheek, in loving sleep,
 Haidée and Juan their siesta took,
 A gentle slumber, but it was not deep,
 For ever and anon a something shook
 Juan, and shuddering o'er his frame would
 creep;
 And Haidée's sweet lips murmured like a
 brook
 A wordless music, and her face so fair
 Stirred with her dream, as rose-leaves with
 the air.

30

Or as the stirring of a deep clear stream
 Within an Alpine hollow, when the wind
 Walks o'er it, was she shaken by the dream,
 The mystical usurper of the mind—
 O'erpowering us to be whate'er may seem
 Good to the soul which we no more can
 bind:
 Strange state of being! (for 'tis still to be)
 Senseless to feel, and with sealed eyes to see.

31

She dreamed of being alone on the sea-shore,
 Chained to a rock; she knew not how, but
 stir
 She could not from the spot, and the loud
 roar
 Grew, and each wave rose roughly, threat-
 ening her;
 And o'er her upper lip they seemed to pour,
 Until she sobbed for breath, and soon they
 were
 Foaming o'er her lone head, so fierce and
 high—
 Each broke to drown her, yet she could not
 die.

32

Anon—she was released, and then she
 strayed
 O'er the sharp shingles with her bleeding
 feet,
 And stumbled almost every step she made;
 And something rolled before her in a sheet,
 Which she must still pursue howe'er afraid:
 'Twas white and indistinct, nor stopped to
 meet
 Her glance nor grasp, for still she gazed and
 grasped,
 And ran, but it escaped her as she clasped.

33

The dream changed:—in a cave she stood,
 its walls
 Were hung with marble icicles; the work
 Of ages on its water-fretted halls,
 Where waves might wash, and seals might
 breed and lurk;
 Her hair was dripping, and the very balls
 Of her black eyes seemed turned to tears,
 and mirk
 The sharp rocks looked below each drop they
 caught,
 Which froze to marble as it fell,—she thought.

34

And wet, and cold, and lifeless at her feet,
 Pale as the foam that frothed on his dead
 brow,
 Which she essayed in vain to clear (how
 sweet
 Were once her cares, how idle seemed they
 now!),
 Lay Juan, nor could aught renew the beat
 Of his quenched heart; and the sea dirges
 low
 Rang in her sad ears like a mermaid's song,
 And that brief dream appeared a life too
 long.

35

And gazing on the dead, she thought his face
 Faded, or altered into something new—
 Like to her father's features, till each trace
 More like and like to Lambro's aspect
 grew—
 With all his keen worn look and Grecian
 grace;
 And starting, she awoke, and what to
 view?
 Oh! Powers of Heaven! what dark eye
 meets she there?
 'Tis—'tis her father's—fixed upon the pair!

36

Then shrieking, she arose, and shrieking fell,
 With joy and sorrow, hope and fear, to see
 Him whom she deemed a habitant where
 dwell
 The ocean-buried, risen from death, to be
 Perchance the death of one she loved too
 well:
 Dear as her father had been to Haidée,
 It was a moment of that awful kind—
 I have seen such—but must not call to mind.

37

Up Juan sprang to Haidée's bitter shriek,
 And caught her falling, and from off the
 wall
 Snatched down his saber, in hot haste to
 wreak
 Vengeance on him who was the cause of
 all:
 Then Lambro, who till now forebore to speak,
 Smiled scornfully, and said, "Within my
 call,
 A thousand scimitars await the word;
 Put up, young man, put up your silly sword."

38

And Haidée clung around him; "Juan, 'tis—
 'Tis Lambro—'tis my father! Kneel with
 me—
 He will forgive us—yes—it must be—yes.
 Oh! dearest father, in this agony
 Of pleasure and of pain—even while I kiss
 Thy garment's hem with transport, can it
 be
 That doubt should mingle with my filial
 joy?
 Deal with me as thou wilt, but spare this
 boy."

39

High and inscrutable the old man stood,
 Calm in his voice, and calm within his
 eye—
 Not always signs with him of calmest mood:
 He looked upon her, but gave no reply;
 Then turned to Juan, in whose cheek the
 blood
 Oft came and went, as there resolved to
 die;
 In arms, at least, he stood, in act to spring
 On the first foe whom Lambro's call might
 bring.

40

"Young man, your sword"; so Lambro once
 more said:
 Juan replied, "Not while this arm is free."
 The old man's cheek grew pale, but not with
 dread,
 And drawing from his belt a pistol, he
 Replied, "Your blood be then on your own
 head."
 Then looked close at the flint, as if to
 see
 'Twas fresh—for he had lately used the
 lock—
 And next proceeded quietly to cock.

41

It has a strange quick jar upon the ear,
 That cocking of a pistol, when you know
 A moment more will bring the sight to
 bear
 Upon your person, twelve yards off, or so;
 A gentlemanly distance, not too near,
 If you have got a former friend for foe;
 But after being fired at once or twice,
 The ear becomes more Irish, and less nice.

42

Lambro presented, and one instant more
 Had stopped this Canto, and Don Juan's
 breath,
 When Haidée threw herself her boy before;
 Stern as her sire: "On me," she cried, "let
 death
 Descend—the fault is mine; this fatal shore
 He found—but sought not. I have pledged
 my faith;
 I love him—I will die with him: I knew
 Your nature's firmness—know your daugh-
 ter's too."

43

A minute past, and she had been all tears,
 And tenderness, and infancy; but now
 She stood as one who championed human
 fears—
 Pale, statue-like, and stern, she wooed the
 blow;
 And tall beyond her sex, and their compeers,
 She drew up to her height, as if to show
 A fairer mark; and with a fixed eye scanned
 Her father's face—but never stopped his
 hand.

44

He gazed on her, and she on him; 'twas
 strange
 How like they looked! the expression was
 the same;
 Serenely savage, with a little change
 In the large dark eye's mutual-darted
 flame;
 For she, too, was as one who could avenge,
 If cause should be—a lioness, though tame.
 Her father's blood before her father's face
 Boiled up, and proved her truly of his race.

45

I said they were alike, their features and
 Their stature, differing but in sex and
 years:
 Even to the delicacy of their hand
 There was resemblance, such as true blood
 wears;
 And now to see them, thus divided, stand
 In fixed ferocity, when joyous tears,
 And sweet sensations, should have welcomed
 both,
 Shows what the passions are in their full
 growth.

46

The father paused a moment, then withdrew

His weapon, and replaced it; but stood still,

And looking on her, as to look her through,
 "Not I," he said, "have sought this stranger's ill;

Not I have made this desolation: few
 Would bear such outrage, and forbear to kill;

But I must do my duty—how thou hast
 Done thine, the present vouches for the past.

47

"Let him disarm; or, by my father's head,
 His own shall roll before you like a ball!"

He raised his whistle as the word he said,
 And blew; another answered to the call,

And rushing in disorderly, though led,
 And armed from boot to turban, one and all,

Some twenty of his train came, rank on rank;

He gave the word, "Arrest or slay the Frank."

48

Then, with a sudden movement, he withdrew

His daughter; while compressed within
 his clasp,

'Twixt her and Juan interposed the crew;
 In vain she struggled in her father's grasp—

His arms were like a serpent's coil: then flew

Upon their prey, as darts an angry asp,
 The file of pirates—save the foremost, who
 Had fallen, with his right shoulder half cut through.

49

The second had his cheek laid open; but

The third, a wary, cool old sworder, took
 The blows upon his cutlass, and then put

His own well in; so well, ere you could
 look,

His man was floored, and helpless at his
 foot,

With the blood running like a little brook
 From two smart saber gashes, deep and red—
 One on the arm, the other on the head.

50

And then they bound him where he fell, and bore

Juan from the apartment: with a sign
 Old Lambro bade them take him to the shore,
 Where lay some ships which were to sail at nine.

They laid him in a boat, and plied the oar
 Until they reached some galliots,¹ placed in line;

On board of one of these, and under hatches,
 They stowed him, with strict orders to the watches.

51

The world is full of strange vicissitudes,
 And here was one exceedingly unpleasant:
 A gentleman so rich in the world's goods,
 Handsome and young, enjoying all the present,

Just at the very time when he least broods
 On such a thing, is suddenly to sea sent,
 Wounded and chained, so that he cannot move,

And all because a lady fell in love.

52

Here I must leave him, for I grow pathetic,
 Moved by the Chinese nymph of tears,
 green tea!

Than whom Cassandra was not more prophetic;

For if my pure libations exceed three,
 I feel my heart become so sympathetic,

That I must have recourse to black Bohea:²
 'Tis pity wine should be so deleterious,

For tea and coffee leave us much more serious,

53

Unless when qualified with thee, Cogniac!³

Sweet Naïad of the Phlegethontic rill!⁴

Ah! why the liver wilt thou thus attack,
 And make, like other nymphs, thy lovers ill?

I would take refuge in weak punch, but *rack*
 (In each sense⁵ of the word), whene'er I fill

¹Small swift galleys.

²Another variety of tea.

³French brandy made from wine produced near the town of Cognac.

⁴Phlegethon: a river of Hades containing fire instead of water.

⁵*I.e.*, "punch" and "suffering."

My mild and midnight beakers to the brim,
Wakes me next morning with its synonym.

54

I leave Don Juan for the present, safe—

Not sound, poor fellow, but severely
wounded;

Yet could his corporal pangs amount to half
Of those with which his Haidée's bosom
bounded!

She was not one to weep, and rave, and chafe,
And then give way, subdued because sur-
rounded;

Her mother was a Moorish maid from Fez,
Where all is Eden, or a wilderness.

55

There the large olive rains its amber store

In marble founts; there grain, and flour, and
fruit,

Gush from the earth until the land runs o'er;

But there, too, many a poison-tree has root,
And midnight listens to the lion's roar,

And long, long deserts scorch the camel's
foot,

Or heaving whelm the helpless caravan;

And as the soil is, so the heart of man.

56

Afric is all the sun's, and as her earth

Her human clay is kindled; full of power
For good or evil, burning from its birth,

The Moorish blood partakes the planet's
hour,

And like the soil beneath it will bring forth:

Beauty and love were Haidée's mother's
dower;

But her large dark eye showed deep Passion's
force,

Though sleeping like a lion near a source.

57

Her daughter, tempered with a milder ray,

Like summer clouds all silvery, smooth,
and fair,

Till slowly charged with thunder they dis-
play

Terror to earth, and tempest to the air,
Had held till now her soft and milky way;

But overwrought with passion and despair,
The fire burst forth from her Numidian veins,
Even as the Simoom¹ sweeps the blasted
plains.

¹A dry, hot, violent dust-laden wind.

58

The last sight which she saw was Juan's gore,
And he himself o'ermastered and cut
down;

His blood was running on the very floor

Where late he trod, her beautiful, her own;
Thus much she viewed an instant and no
more,—

Her struggles ceased with one convulsive
groan;

On her sire's arm, which until now scarce
held

Her writhing, fell she like a cedar felled.

59

A vein had burst, and her sweet lips' pure
dyes

Were dabbled with the deep blood which
ran o'er;

And her head drooped, as when the lily lies
O'ercharged with rain: her summoned
handmaids bore

Their lady to her couch with gushing eyes;
Of herbs and cordials they produced their
store,

But she defied all means they could employ,
Like one life could not hold, nor death de-
stroy.

60

Days lay she in that state unchanged, though
chill—

With nothing livid, still her lips were red;
She had no pulse, but death seemed absent
still;

No hideous sign proclaimed her surely
dead;

Corruption came not in each mind to kill
All hope; to look upon her sweet face bred
New thoughts of life, for it seemed full of
soul—

She had so much, earth could not claim the
whole.

61

The ruling passion, such as marble shows

When exquisitely chiseled, still lay there,
But fixed as marble's unchanged aspect
throws

O'er the fair Venus, but for ever fair;

O'er the Laocoön's all eternal throes,

And ever-dying Gladiator's air,
Their energy like life forms all their fame,
Yet looks not life, for they are still the same.

62

She woke at length, but not as sleepers wake,
 Rather the dead, for life seemed something
 new,
 A strange sensation which she must partake
 Perforce, since whatsoever met her' view
 Struck not on memory, though a heavy ache
 Lay at her heart, whose earliest beat still
 true
 Brought back the sense of pain without the
 cause,
 For, for a while, the furies made a pause.

63

She looked on many a face with vacant
 eye,
 On many a token without knowing what;
 She saw them watch her without asking
 why,
 And recked not who around her pillow sat;
 Not speechless, though she spoke not; not a
 sigh
 Relieved her thoughts; dull silence and
 quick chat
 Were tried in vain by those who served; she
 gave
 No sign, save breath, of having left the grave.

64

Her handmaids tended, but she heeded not;
 Her father watched, she turned her eyes
 away;
 She recognized no being, and no spot,
 However dear or cherished in their day;
 They changed from room to room, but all
 forgot,
 Gentle, but without memory she lay;
 At length those eyes, which they would fain
 be weaning
 Back to old thoughts, waxed full of fearful
 meaning.

65

And then a slave bethought her of a harp;
 The harper came, and tuned his instru-
 ment;
 At the first notes, irregular and sharp,
 On him her flashing eyes a moment bent,
 Then to the wall she turned as if to warp
 Her thoughts from sorrow through her
 heart re-sent;
 And he began a long low island-song
 Of ancient days, ere tyranny grew strong.

66

Anon her thin wan fingers beat the wall
 In time to his old tune; he changed the
 theme,
 And sung of love; the fierce name struck
 through all
 Her recollection; on her flashed the dream
 Of what she was, and is, if ye could call
 To be so being; in a gushing stream
 The tears rushed forth from her o'erclouded
 brain,
 Like mountain mists at length dissolved in
 rain.

67

Short solace, vain relief!—thought came too
 quick,
 And whirled her brain to madness; she
 arose
 As one who ne'er had dwelt among the sick,
 And flew at all she met, as on her foes;
 But no one ever heard her speak or shriek,
 Although her paroxysm drew towards its
 close;—
 Hers was a frenzy which disdained to rave,
 Even when they smote her, in the hope to
 save.

68

Yet she betrayed at times a gleam of sense;
 Nothing could make her meet her father's
 face,
 Though on all other things with looks intense
 She gazed, but none she ever could re-
 trace;
 Food she refused, and raiment; no pretense
 Availed for either; neither change of place,
 Nor time, nor skill, nor remedy, could give her
 Senses to sleep—the power seemed gone for
 ever.

69

Twelve days and nights she withered thus;
 at last,
 Without a groan, or sigh, or glance, to
 show
 A parting pang, the spirit from her passed:
 And they who watched her nearest could
 not know
 The very instant, till the change that cast
 Her sweet face into shadow, dull and slow,
 Glazed o'er her eyes—the beautiful, the
 black—
 Oh! to possess such luster—and then lack!

70

She died, but not alone, she held within
 A second principle of life, which might
 Have dawned a fair and sinless child of sin;
 But closed its little being without light,
 And went down to the grave unborn, wherein
 Blossom and bough lie withered with one
 blight;
 In vain the dews of Heaven descend above
 The bleeding flower and blasted fruit of love.

71

Thus lived—thus died she; never more on
 her
 Shall sorrow light, or shame. She was not
 made
 Through years or moons the inner weight to
 bear,
 Which colder hearts endure till they are
 laid
 By age in earth: her days and pleasures were
 Brief, but delightful—such as had not
 stayed
 Long with her destiny; but she sleeps well
 By the sea-shore, whereon she loved to dwell.

72

That isle is now all desolate and bare,
 Its dwellings down, its tenants passed
 away;
 None but her own and father's grave is
 there,
 And nothing outward tells of human
 clay;
 Ye could not know where lies a thing so
 fair,
 No stone is there to show, no tongue to
 say,
 What was; no dirge, except the hollow sea's,
 Mourns o'er the beauty of the Cyclades.

73

But many a Greek maid in a loving song
 Sighs o'er her name; and many an islander
 With her sire's story makes the night less
 long;
 Valor was his, and beauty dwelt with her;
 If she loved rashly, her life paid for wrong—
 A heavy price must all pay who thus
 err,
 In some shape; let none think to fly the
 danger,
 For soon or late Love is his own avenger.

ON THIS DAY I COM- PLETE MY THIRTY- SIXTH YEAR¹

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,
 Since others it hath ceased to move:
 Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
 Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf;
 The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
 The worm, the canker, and the grief
 Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys
 Is lone as some volcanic isle;
 No torch is kindled at its blaze—
 A funeral pile.

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
 The exalted portion of the pain
 And power of love, I cannot share,
 But wear the chain.

But 'tis not *thus*—and 'tis not *here*—
 Such thoughts should shake my soul, nor
now,
 Where glory decks the hero's bier,
 Or binds his brow.

The sword, the banner, and the field,
 Glory and Greece, around me see!
 The Spartan, borne upon his shield,²
 Was not more free.

Awake! (not Greece—she *is* awake!)
 Awake, my spirit! Think through *whom*
 Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
 And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down,
 Unworthy manhood!—unto thee
 Indifferent should the smile or frown
 Of beauty be.

If thou regrett'st thy youth, *why live?*
 The land of honorable death
 Is here:—up to the field, and give
 Away thy breath!

Seek out—less often sought than found—
 A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
 Then look around, and choose thy ground,
 And take thy rest.

¹Written at Missolonghi on 22 January, 1824; published in the same year.

²Wounded or slain Spartans were borne from the field upon their shields.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822)

Shelley was born at Field Place, near Horsham, in Sussex, on 4 August, 1792, the eldest of six children born to Sir Timothy and Elizabeth Shelley. His childhood was sheltered and happy until, at the age of ten, he was placed in a school at Brentford, where his remarkable beauty and appearance of gentleness tempted his school-fellows to bully and torment him. There is reason for believing that his days here and later at Eton, where he was in residence from 1804 until 1810, were by no means wholly unhappy, and he made some friends at Eton. Nevertheless he neither understood nor was understood by his school-fellows, and the strangeness of his temperament was more in evidence than his talents, with the result that he suffered much. A school-contemporary wrote, "I have seen him surrounded, hooted, baited like a maddened bull, and at this distance of time I seem to hear ringing in my ears the cry which Shelley was wont to utter in his paroxysm of revengeful anger." Imaginative, sensitive, over-wrought, largely unguided, Shelley in effect retired as much as possible from the external world to a world of his own. There he dreamed his own dreams, pursued studies not admitted to the curriculum, and read strange books—among them William Godwin's *Political Justice*. In the spring of 1810 Shelley entered University College, Oxford. Here, of course, he had greater freedom than at Eton, and no wise guidance to direct his thoughts and activities, no combatants even to stiffen with substance his eager scientific and philosophic inquiries. The result was that Shelley, already converted to Godwin's gospel of reason, after some study of Locke and Hume wrote a pamphlet on *The Necessity of Atheism*, grounding his conclusion on the contention that all knowledge must come through the senses. This pamphlet he proceeded to circulate among bishops, heads of colleges, and others, with the consequence that, about eleven months after his coming to Oxford, he was expelled. The event not unnaturally caused difficulties with his father, who was a kindly, well-intentioned country gentleman, not without his perceptions—as is shown by a sentence from a letter to his solicitor, "This misguided young man courts persecution, and which to him would be a favor"—but totally unfitted to deal amicably with his terrible son. It was impossible that either should understand the other, and from this time Shelley's personal relations with his father practically ceased, though after a short interval Sir Timothy agreed to give his son a small allowance. In August, 1811, Shelley eloped with Harriet Westbrook, the daughter of a well-to-do coffee-house keeper—an event which completed Shelley's estrangement from his father. He was nineteen at the time, and the girl sixteen. He had made her a convert to his political and philosophical radicalism and he felt for her a master's enthusiasm for a willing disciple, and perhaps something more, but he was not genuinely in love with her. She, on the other hand, was in love with him, and made him believe that by marrying her he could rescue her from tyranny exercised by her father.

A part of Shelley's strangeness was his habit of acting fully and immediately upon his convictions, whatever they were, and, in spite of experience, he believed that other people needed only to be told the saving truth in order to act on it. After his marriage he spent several years in wandering about, going to Ireland and to various places in England, attempting to advance the cause of freedom and of emancipation from outworn institutions by scattering incendiary literature among the people he met. During this period he learned that William Godwin was still alive and immediately got into communication with him, flattering Godwin by telling him that he was the author, as indeed he practically was, of all his beliefs. In the spring of 1814 Shelley became definitely estranged from his wife, and the two finally separated in May. She had borne him one child and was about to bear him another. He, however, had fallen violently in love with Godwin's daughter Mary, and it was in accordance with the principles of all three that the existence of his wife should be no bar to his union with Mary. Godwin, Shelley, and Mary believed that marriage was an iniquitous institution, since love as well as everything else should be completely free. Accordingly in July, 1814, Shelley and Mary began living together. Two years later Harriet Shelley drowned herself in the Serpentine, and Shelley then married Mary Godwin. It is not clear how far Shelley is to be blamed for his wife's suicide, but it is clear enough that Shelley's habit of acting instantly on his convictions was a force which no ordinary considerations of humanity towards others could have stopped. In 1814 he had gone to France with Mary Godwin; in 1816 he was in Switzerland, and during that summer spent much time with Byron there; in 1818 he again left England, this time not to return. The remaining years of his life were spent in Italy. He was at Naples and Venice in 1818 and 1819, at Rome in the latter year and in 1820, and at Pisa from 1820 until 1822. He was drowned while sailing in the Bay of Lerici on 8 July, 1822. When his body was found later, washed up

on the shore, he had a volume of Sophocles in one pocket and a volume of Keats in another—the latter open with its covers turned back, as if he had suddenly thrust it there when the waters threatened to engulf him. He was buried at Rome.

When Shelley went to Italy he had already written much prose and poetry, but nearly all his greatest work was done during the last four years of his life. Then the fire of conviction which had intensely burned in him since boyhood broke forth into poetry which, for its union of metrical skill, ethereal imagination, and passionate ardor, has no equal in English literature. His ardor was for a better world, but a world to be made better, on Godwinian lines, by the repudiation of practically all the institutions which give form to society. He himself was, as Professor George Gordon has said, "an unfilial son, a professed atheist, unhonored by his school, rejected by his university, an adulterer, and the deserter, if not the murderer of his wife,—the avowed enemy of all constituted power, in state, church, and family,—advocate, it was reported, of a polygamous and godless Arcadia" (Wharton Lect. XIV, Brit. Acad.)—and all this for the sake of a better world. It is no wonder that he should be at once worshiped and abhorred, at once "upheld as a demi-god, and abjured as a sweet-voiced demon" (W. Sharp, *Shelley*, p. 11). He was, in truth, something of both, for, however wrong-headed he was, he was something more than human in his sincerity, his unworldliness, and his gift of enraptured song.

HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY¹

I

THE awful shadow of some unseen Power
Floats though unseen among us,—visit-
ing
This various world with as inconstant wing
As summer winds that creep from flower to
flower,—
Like moonbeams that behind some piny
mountain shower,
It visits with inconstant glance
Each human heart and countenance;
Like hues and harmonies of evening,—
Like clouds in starlight widely
spread,—
Like memory of music fled,—
Like aught that for its grace may be
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

¹Written probably in Switzerland in the summer of 1816; published in the *Examiner* (edited by Leigh Hunt), January, 1817. By intellectual beauty Shelley means an immaterial form or archetype which is beauty itself. When we contemplate beautiful objects we get some notion, but only a partial, incomplete notion, of what beauty itself must be; for material objects, no matter how beautiful, always contain some flaws and are subject to change and decay. It is only when we are carried beyond the incomplete beauty of material objects that we are able to contemplate the idea of beauty itself. The conception is Platonic and the best commentary on this and other poems by Shelley is the speech of Diotima in Plato's *Symposium*. Shelley's Platonism, however, is frequently, if not always, combined with essentially modern ideas which are its negative. This is illustrated in the present poem by Shelley's hope that the spirit of beauty, could it be more securely possessed by men, would throw them back on themselves in a sudden access of universal brotherly love.

II

Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost consecrate
With thine own hues all thou dost shine
upon
Of human thought or form,—where art
thou gone?
Why dost thou pass away and leave our
state,
This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and deso-
late?
Ask why the sunlight not for ever
Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain-
river,
Why aught should fail and fade that once is
shown,
Why fear and dream and death and
birth
Cast on the daylight of this earth
Such gloom,—why man has such a
scope
For love and hate, despondency and hope?

III

No voice from some sublimer world hath
ever
To sage or poet these responses given—
Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost,
and Heaven,
Remain the records of their vain endeavor,
Frail spells—whose uttered charm might not
avail to sever,
From all we hear and all we see,
Doubt, chance, and mutability.
Thy light alone—like mist o'er mountains
driven,
Or music by the night-wind sent
Through strings of some still instru-
ment,

Or moonlight on a midnight stream,
Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet
dream.

IV

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds
depart

And come, for some uncertain moments
lent.

Man were immortal, and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,
Keep with thy glorious train firm state
within his heart.

Thou messenger of sympathies,

That wax and wane in lovers' eyes—

Thou—that to human thought art nourish-
ment,

Like darkness to a dying flame!

Depart not as thy shadow came,

Depart not—lest the grave should be,

Like life and fear, a dark reality.

V

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
Through many a listening chamber, cave
and ruin,

And starlight wood, with fearful steps
pursuing

Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.

I called on poisonous names with which our
youth is fed;

I was not heard—I saw them not—

When musing deeply on the lot

Of life, at that sweet time when winds are
wooing

All vital things that wake to bring

News of birds and blossoming,—

Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;

I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy!

VI

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers

To thee and thine—have I not kept the
vow?

With beating heart and streaming eyes,
even now

I call the phantoms of a thousand hours

Each from his voiceless grave: they have in
visioned bowers

Of studious zeal or love's delight

Outwatched with me the envious
night—

They know that never joy illumed my brow

Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst
free

This world from its dark slavery,

That thou—O awful LOVELINESS,

Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot
express.

VII

The day becomes more solemn and serene

When noon is past—there is a harmony

In autumn, and a luster in its sky,

Which through the summer is not heard or
seen,

As if it could not be, as if it had not been!

Thus let thy power, which like the
truth

Of nature on my passive youth

Descended, to my onward life supply

Its calm—to one who worships thee,

And every form containing thee,

Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did
bind

To fear himself, and love all human kind.

OZYMANDIAS¹

I MET a traveler from an antique land

Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of
stone

Stand in the desert. Near them, on the
sand,

Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose
frown,

And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold com-
mand,

Tell that its sculptor well those passions
read

Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless
things,

The hand that mocked them, and the heart
that fed:²

And on the pedestal these words appear:

"My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:

Look on my works, ye Mighty, and de-
spair!"

Nothing beside remains. Round the decay

Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare

The lone and level sands stretch far away.

¹Published in the *Examiner*, January, 1818.

²The hand, *i. e.*, of the sculptor, and the heart of Ozymandias.

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES¹

I

The sun is warm, the sky is clear,
 The waves are dancing fast and bright,
 Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
 The purple noon's transparent might,
 The breath of the moist earth is light,
 Around its unexpanded buds;
 Like many a voice of one delight,
 The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
 The City's voice itself, is soft like Solitude's.

II

I see the Deep's untrampled floor
 With green and purple seaweeds
 strown;
 I see the waves upon the shore,
 Like light dissolved in star-showers,
 thrown:
 I sit upon the sands alone,—
 The lightning of the noontide ocean
 Is flashing round me, and a tone
 Arises from its measured motion,
 How sweet! did any heart now share in my
 emotion.

III

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
 Nor peace within nor calm around,
 Nor that content surpassing wealth
 The sage in meditation found,
 And walked with inward glory
 crowned—
 Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
 Others I see whom these surround—
 Smiling they live, and call life pleasure;—
 To me that cup has been dealt in another
 measure.

IV

Yet now despair itself is mild,
 Even as the winds and waters are;
 I could lie down like a tired child,
 And weep away the life of care
 Which I have borne and yet must bear,

¹Said by Mrs. Shelley to have been written in December, 1818; published in 1824.

Till death like sleep might steal on me,
 And I might feel in the warm air
 My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
 Breathe o'er my dying brain its last mo-
 notony.

V

Some might lament that I were cold,
 As I, when this sweet day is gone,
 Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
 Insults with this untimely moan;
 They might lament—for I am one
 Whom men love not,—and yet regret,
 Unlike this day, which, when the sun
 Shall on its stainless glory set,
 Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in
 memory yet.²

ENGLAND IN 1819³

AN OLD, mad, blind, despised, and dying
 king,⁴—
 Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow
 Through public scorn,—mud from a muddy
 spring,—
 Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know,
 But leech-like to their fainting country cling,
 Till they drop, blind in blood, without a
 blow,—
 A people starved and stabbed in the untilled
 field,—
 An army, which liberticide and prey
 Makes as a two-edged sword to all who
 wield,—
 Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and
 slay;
 Religion Christless, Godless—a book sealed;
 A Senate,—Time's worst statute unre-
 pealed,⁵—
 Are graves, from which a glorious Phantom⁶
 may
 Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

²This stanza may be paraphrased: Some might lament my death, as I shall lament the passing of this sweet day;—they might lament, but not with joy, such as will surround the memory of this day.

³First published in 1839, presumably written in 1819.

⁴George III.

⁵The law imposing civil disabilities on Roman Catholics.

⁶Liberty.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND¹

I

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead

Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingéd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odors plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,

Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,

Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad,² even from the dim verge

Of the horizon to the zenith's height,

The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

¹Written in 1819, published in 1820. "This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapors which pour down the autumnal rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cisalpine regions. The phenomenon alluded to at the conclusion of the third stanza is well known to naturalists. The vegetation at the bottom of the sea, of rivers, and of lakes, sympathizes with that of the land in the change of seasons, and is consequently influenced by the winds which announce it" (Shelley's note).

²Attendant upon Bacchus.

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulcher,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh,
hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams

The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baia's bay,³
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them!
Thou

For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below

The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear

The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh,
hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,

As then, when to outstrip thy skyey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

³In Campania, Italy.

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

v

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among man-
kind!

Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O, Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

THE INDIAN SERENADE¹

I

I ARISE from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright:
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Hath led me—who knows how?
To thy chamber window, Sweet!

II

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream—
The Champak² odors fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart;—
As I must on thine,
Oh, beloved as thou art!

III

O lift me from the grass!
I die! I faint! I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast;—
Oh! press it to thine own again,
Where it will break at last.

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY³

I

THE fountains mingle with the river
And the rivers with the Ocean,
The winds of Heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one spirit meet and mingle.
Why not I with thine?—

II

See the mountains kiss high Heaven
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister-flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother;
And the sunlight clasps the earth
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
What is all this sweet work worth
If thou kiss not me?

THE SENSITIVE PLANT⁴

PART FIRST

A SENSITIVE Plant in a garden grew,
And the young winds fed it with silver dew,
And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light,
And closed them beneath the kisses of Night.

And the Spring arose on the garden fair,
Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere;
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark
breast
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with
bliss
In the garden, the field, or the wilderness,

¹Written in 1819 and published by Hunt in *The Indicator* in the same year.

⁴Written at Pisa early in 1820 and published in the same year.

¹Written in 1819, published in *The Liberal*, 1822.

²An East Indian tree related to the magnolia.

Like a doe in the noontide with love's sweet
want,
As the companionless Sensitive Plant.

The snowdrop, and then the violet,
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,
And their breath was mixed with fresh odor,
sent
From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

Then the pied wind-flowers¹ and the tulip
tall,
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,
Till they die of their own dear loveliness;

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,
Whom youth makes so fair and passion so
pale
That the light of its tremulous bells is seen
Through their pavilions of tender green;

And the hyacinth purple, and white, and
blue,
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,
It was felt like an odor within the sense;

And the rose like a nymph to the bath addressed,
Which unveiled the depth of her glowing
breast,
Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air
The soul of her beauty and love lay bare:

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up,
As a Mænad, its moonlight-colored cup,
Till the fiery star, which is its eye,
Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky;

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet
tuberoze,
The sweetest flower for scent that blows;
And all rare blossoms from every clime
Grew in that garden in perfect prime.

And on the stream whose inconstant bosom
Was pranked, under boughs of embowering
blossom,
With golden and green light, slanting
through
Their heaven of many a tangled hue,

Broad water-lilies lay tremulously,
And starry river-buds glimmered by,
And around them the soft stream did glide
and dance
With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.

And the sinuous paths of lawn and of moss,
Which led through the garden along and
across,
Some open at once to the sun and the breeze,
Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees,

Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells
As fair as the fabulous asphodels,
And flow'rets which, drooping as day
drooped too,
Fell into pavilions, white, purple, and blue,
To roof the glow-worm from the evening
dew.

And from this undefiled Paradise
The flowers (as an infant's awakening eyes
Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet
Can first lull, and at last must awaken it),

When Heaven's blithe winds had unfolded
them,
As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem,
Shone smiling to Heaven, and every one
Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun;

For each one was interpenetrated
With the light and the odor its neighbor
shed,
Like young lovers whom youth and love
make dear
Wrapped and filled by their mutual atmosphere.

But the Sensitive Plant which could give
small fruit
Of the love which it felt from the leaf to the
root,
Received more than all, it loved more than
ever,
Where none wanted but it, could belong to
the giver,—

For the Sensitive Plant has no bright flower;
Radiance and odor are not its dower;
It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full,
It desires what it has not, the Beautiful!

¹Anemones.

The light winds which from unsustaining
wings

Shed the music of many murmurings;
The beams which dart from many a star
Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar;

The pluméd insects swift and free,
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,
Laden with light and odor, which pass
Over the gleam of the living grass;

The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,
Then wander like spirits among the spheres,
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears;

The quivering vapors of dim noontide,
Which like a sea o'er the warm earth glide,
In which every sound, and odor, and beam,
Move, as reeds in a single stream;

Each and all like ministering angels were
For the Sensitive Plant sweet joy to bear,
Whilst the lagging hours of the day went by
Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky.

And when evening descended from Heaven
above,
And the Earth was all rest, and the air was
all love,
And delight, though less bright, was far
more deep,
And the day's veil fell from the world of
sleep,

And the beasts, and the birds, and the insects
were drowned
In an ocean of dreams without a sound;
Whose waves never mark, though they ever
impress
The light sand which paves it, consciousness;

(Only overhead the sweet nightingale
Ever sang more sweet as the day might fail,
And snatches of its Elysian chant
Were mixed with the dreams of the Sensitive
Plant);—

The Sensitive Plant was the earliest
Upgathered into the bosom of rest;
A sweet child weary of its delight,
The feeblest and yet the favorite,
Cradled within the embrace of Night.

PART SECOND

There was a Power in this sweet place,
An Eve in this Eden; a ruling Grace
Which to the flowers, did they waken or
dream,
Was as God is to the starry scheme.

A Lady, the wonder of her kind,
Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind
Which, dilating, had molded her mien and
motion
Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the
ocean,

Tended the garden from morn to even:
And the meteors of that sublunar Heaven,
Like the lamps of the air when Night walks
forth,
Laughed round her footsteps up from the
Earth!

She had no companion of mortal race,
But her tremulous breath and her flushing
face
Told, whilst the morn kissed the sleep from
her eyes,
That her dreams were less slumber than
Paradise:

As if some bright Spirit for her sweet sake
Had deserted Heaven while the stars were
awake,
As if yet around her he lingering were,
Though the veil of daylight concealed him
from her.

Her step seemed to pity the grass it pressed;
You might hear by the heaving of her
breast,
That the coming and going of the wind
Brought pleasure there and left passion be-
hind.

And wherever her airy footstep trod,
Her trailing hair from the grassy sod
Erased its light vestige, with shadowy sweep,
Like a sunny storm o'er the dark green deep.

I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet;
I doubt not they felt the spirit that came
From her glowing fingers through all their
frame.

She sprinkled bright water from the stream
On those that were faint with the sunny
beam;

And out of the cups of the heavy flowers
She emptied the rain of the thunder-showers.

She lifted their heads with her tender hands,
And sustained them with rods and osier-
bands;

If the flowers had been her own infants, she
Could never have nursed them more ten-
derly.

And all killing insects and gnawing worms,
And things of obscene and unlovely forms,
She bore, in a basket of Indian woof,
Into the rough woods far aloof,—

In a basket, of grasses and wild-flowers full,
The freshest her gentle hands could pull
For the poor banished insects, whose intent,
Although they did ill, was innocent.

But the bee and the beamlike ephemeris¹
Whose path is the lightning's, and soft moths
that kiss

The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm not,
did she
Make her attendant angels be.

And many an antenatal tomb,
Where butterflies dream of the life to come,
She left clinging round the smooth and dark
Edge of the odorous cedar bark.

This fairest creature from earliest Spring
Thus moved through the garden ministering
All the sweet season of Summertime,
And ere the first leaf looked brown—she
died!

PART THIRD

Three days the flowers of the garden fair,
Like stars when the moon is awakened, were,
Or the waves of Baïæ, ere luminous
She floats up through the smoke of Vesuvius.²

¹A slender, delicate insect with membranous wings, whose adult life lasts only a few hours or days (more properly, ephemerid).

²*I.e.*, the flowers were dimmed, their brightness overcast as is that of the stars by the moon, or as is that of the waves of the Bay of Naples before the moon rises through the smoke of Vesuvius.

And on the fourth, the Sensitive Plant
Felt the sound of the funeral chant,
And the steps of the bearers, heavy and
slow,
And the sobs of the mourners, deep and low;

The weary sound and the heavy breath,
And the silent motions of passing death,
And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank,
Sent through the pores of the coffin-plank;

The dark grass, and the flowers among the
grass,
Were bright with tears as the crowd did
pass;
From their sighs the wind caught a mournful
tone,
And sat in the pines, and gave groan for
groan.

The garden, once fair, became cold and foul,
Like the corpse of her who had been its soul,
Which at first was lovely as if in sleep,
Then slowly changed, till it grew a heap
To make men tremble who never weep.

Swift Summer into the Autumn flowed,
And frost in the mist of the morning rode,
Though the noonday sun looked clear and
bright,
Mocking the spoil of the secret night.

The rose-leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,
Paved the turf and the moss below.
The lilies were drooping, and white, and wan,
Like the head and the skin of a dying man.

And Indian plants, of scent and hue
The sweetest that ever were fed on dew,
Leaf after leaf, day after day,
Were massed into the common clay.

And the leaves, brown, yellow, and gray, and
red,
And white with the whiteness of what is
dead,
Like troops of ghosts on the dry wind passed;
Their whistling noise made the birds aghast.

And the gusty winds waked the wingéd seeds,
Out of their birthplace of ugly weeds,
Till they clung round many a sweet flower's
stem,
Which rotted into the earth with them.

The water-blooms under the rivulet
Fell from the stalks on which they were set;
And the eddies drove them here and there,
As the winds did those of the upper air.

Then the rain came down, and the broken
stalks
Were bent and tangled across the walks;
And the leafless network of parasite bowers
Massed into ruin; and all sweet flowers.

Between the time of the wind and the snow
All loathliest weeds began to grow,
Whose coarse leaves were splashed with
many a speck,
Like the water-snake's belly and the toad's
back.

And thistles, and nettles, and darnels¹ rank,
And the dock, and henbane, and hemlock
dank,
Stretched out its long and hollow shank,
And stifled the air till the dead wind stank.

And plants, at whose names the verse feels
loath,
Filled the place with a monstrous under-
growth,
Prickly, and pulposus, and blistering, and
blue,
Livid, and starred with a lurid dew.

And agarics, and fungi, with mildew and
mold
Started like mist from the wet ground cold;
Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead
With a spirit of growth had been animated!²

Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum,
Made the running rivulet thick and dumb,
And at its outlet flags huge as stakes
Dammed it up with roots knotted like water-
snakes.

And hour by hour, when the air was still,
The vapors arose which have strength to kill;

¹A flowering weed belonging to the grass family.

²In the edition of 1820 there was a stanza following here which Mrs. Shelley omitted from all editions from 1839 onwards. It is as follows:

Their moss rotted off them, flake by flake,
Till the thick stalks stuck like a murderer's stake,
Where rags of loose flesh yet tremble on high,
Infecting the winds that wander by.

At morn they were seen, at noon they were
felt,
At night they were darkness no star could
melt.

And unctuous meteors from spray to spray
Crept and flitted in broad noonday
Unseen; every branch on which they alit
By a venomous blight was burned and bit.

The Sensitive Plant, like one forbid,³
Wept, and the tears within each lid
Of its folded leaves, which together grew,
Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

For the leaves soon fell, and the branches
soon
By the heavy axe of the blast were hewn;
The sap shrank to the root through every
pore
As blood to a heart that will beat no more.

For Winter came: the wind was his whip:
One choppy finger was on his lip:
He had torn the cataracts from the hills
And they clanked at his girdle like manacles;

His breath was a chain which without a
sound
The earth, and the air, and the water
bound;
He came, fiercely driven, in his chariot-
throne
By the tenfold blasts of the Arctic zone.

Then the weeds which were forms of living
death
Fled from the frost to the earth beneath.
Their decay and sudden flight from frost
Was but like the vanishing of a ghost!

And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant
The moles and the dormice died for want:
The birds dropped stiff from the frozen air
And were caught in the branches naked and
bare.

First there came down a thawing rain
And its dull drops froze on the boughs again;
Then there steamed up a freezing dew
Which to the drops of the thaw-rain grew;

And a northern whirlwind, wandering about
Like a wolf that had smelt a dead child out,

³Accursed.

Shook the boughs thus laden, and heavy, and stiff,
And snapped them off with his rigid griff.¹

When Winter had gone and Spring came back
The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck;
But the mandrakes, and toadstools, and docks, and darnels,
Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels.

CONCLUSION

Whether the Sensitive Plant, or that
Which within its boughs like a Spirit sat,
Ere its outward form had known decay,
Now felt this change, I cannot say.

Whether that Lady's gentle mind,
No longer with the form combined
Which scattered love, as stars do light,
Found sadness, where it left delight,

I dare not guess; but in this life
Of error, ignorance, and strife,
Where nothing is, but all things seem,
And we the shadows of the dream,

It is a modest creed, and yet
Pleasant if one considers it,
To own that death itself must be,
Like all the rest, a mockery.

That garden sweet, that lady fair,
And all sweet shapes and odors there,
In truth have never passed away:
'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed; not they.

For love, and beauty, and delight,
There is no death nor change: their might
Exceeds our organs, which endure
No light, being themselves obscure.

THE CLOUD²

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.

From my wings are shaken the dews that waken

The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skyey bow-ers,

Lightning my pilot sits;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in Heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine Sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead;
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when Sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardors of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of Heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbéd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the Moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;

¹Grip.

²Written and published in 1820.

And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin
roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built
tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on
high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.¹

I bind the Sun's throne with a burning
zone,
And the Moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and
swim
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like
shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,—
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the Powers of the air are chained to
my chair,
Is the million-colored bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colors wove,
While the moist Earth was laughing be-
low.

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
And the nursling of the Sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and
shores,
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain when with never a stain
The pavilion of Heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their
convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,²
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost
from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

¹*I.e.*, with the moon and the stars.

²*I.e.*, the blue dome of air. A cenotaph is an empty tomb, or a monument erected in honor of one buried elsewhere.

TO A SKYLARK³

HAIL to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever
singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of Heaven,
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill
delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear
Until we hardly see—we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven
is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of
melody.

Like a Poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded
not:

³Written at Leghorn in 1820 and published in the same year.

Like a high-born maiden
 In a palace-tower,
 Soothing her love-laden
 Soul in secret hour
 With music sweet as love, which overflows
 her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
 In a dell of dew,
 Scattering unbeholden
 Its ærial hue
 Among the flowers and grass, which screen
 it from the view!

Like a rose embowered
 In its own green leaves,
 By warm winds deflowered,
 Till the scent it gives
 Makes faint with too much sweet those
 heavy wingéd thieves:

Sound of vernal showers
 On the twinkling grass,
 Rain-awakened flowers,
 All that ever was
 Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth
 surpass:

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
 What sweet thoughts are thine:
 I have never heard
 Praise of love or wine
 That panted forth a flood of rapture so di-
 vine.

Chorus Hymeneal,
 Or triumphal chant,
 Matched with thine would be all
 But an empty vaunt,
 A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden
 want.

What objects are the fountains
 Of thy happy strain?
 What fields, or waves, or mountains?
 What shapes of sky or plain?
 What love of thine own kind? what ignorance
 of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
 Languor cannot be:
 Shadow of annoyance
 Never came near thee:
 Thou lovest—but ne'er knew love's sad
 satiety.

Waking or asleep,
 Thou of death must deem
 Things more true and deep
 Than we mortals dream,
 Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal
 stream?

We look before and after,
 And pine for what is not:
 Our sincerest laughter
 With some pain is fraught;
 Our sweetest songs are those that tell of
 saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
 Hate, and pride, and fear;
 If we were things born
 Not to shed a tear,
 I know not how thy joy we ever should come
 near.

Better than all measures
 Of delightful sound,
 Better than all treasures
 That in books are found,
 Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the
 ground!

Teach me half the gladness
 That thy brain must know,
 Such harmonious madness
 From my lips would flow
 The world should listen then—as I am listen-
 ing now.

ODE TO LIBERTY¹

Yet, Freedom, yet, thy banner, torn but flying,
 Streams like a thunder-storm against the wind.
 —BYRON.

I

A GLORIOUS people vibrated again
 The lightning of the nations: Liberty
 From heart to heart, from tower to tower,
 o'er Spain,
 Scattering contagious fire into the sky,
 Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its
 dismay,

¹Written early in 1820 and published in the same year. The motto is from *Childe Harold*, IV, Stanza 98. The occasion of the poem was an uprising against absolutist government in Spain, which occurred early in 1820 and at the time appeared to be triumphing in Madrid.

And in the rapid plumes of song
 Clothed itself, sublime and strong
 (As a young eagle soars the morning clouds
 among),
 Hovering in verse o'er its accustomed prey;
 Till from its station in the Heaven of
 fame
 The Spirit's whirlwind rapped it, and the
 ray
 Of the remotest sphere of living flame
 Which paves the void was from behind it
 flung,
 As foam from a ship's swiftmess, when
 there came
 A voice out of the deep: I will record the
 same.

II

"The Sun and the serenest Moon sprang
 forth:
 The burning stars of the abyss were hurled
 Into the depths of Heaven. The dædal¹
 earth,
 That island in the ocean of the world,
 Hung in its cloud of all-sustaining air:
 But this divinest universe
 Was yet a chaos and a curse,
 For thou² wert not: but, power from worst
 producing worse,
 The spirit of the beasts was kindled there,
 And of the birds, and of the watery
 forms,
 And there was war among them, and de-
 spair
 Within them, raging without truce or
 terms:
 The bosom of their violated nurse
 Groaned, for beasts warred on beasts, and
 worms on worms,
 And men on men; each heart was as a hell
 of storms.

III

"Man, the imperial shape, then multiplied
 His generations under the pavilion
 Of the Sun's throne: palace and pyramid,
 Temple and prison, to many a swarming
 million
 Were, as to mountain-wolves their ragged
 caves.
 This human living multitude
 Was savage, cunning, blind, and rude,

For thou wert not; but o'er the populous
 solitude,
 Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves,
 Hung Tyranny; beneath, sat deified
 The sister-pest,³ congregator of slaves;
 Into the shadow of her pinions wide
 Anarchs and priests, who fed on gold and
 blood
 Till with the stain their inmost souls are
 dyed,
 Drove the astonished herds of men from
 every side.

IV

"The nodding promontories, and blue isles,
 And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous⁴
 waves
 Of Greece, basked glorious in the open smiles
 Of favoring Heaven: from their enchanted
 caves
 Prophetic echoes flung dim melody.
 On the unapprehensive wild,
 The vine, the corn, the olive mild,
 Grew savage yet, to human use unreconciled;
 And, like unfolded flowers beneath the
 sea,
 Like the man's thought dark in the
 infant's brain,
 Like aught that is which wraps what is to
 be,
 Art's deathless dreams lay veiled by
 many a vein
 Of Parian stone; and, yet a speechless child,
 Verse murmured, and Philosophy did
 strain
 Her lidless eyes for thee; when o'er the
 Ægean main

V

"Athens arose: a city such as vision
 Builds from the purple crags and silver
 towers
 Of battlemented cloud, as in derision
 Of kingliest masonry: the ocean-floors
 Pave it; the evening sky pavilions it;
 Its portals are inhabited
 By thunder-zonéd winds, each head
 Within its cloudy wings with sun-fire gar-
 landed,—
 A divine work! Athens, diviner yet,

¹Curiously contrived.²Liberty.³I.e., religion.⁴Dividing.

Glamed with its crest of columns, on
 the will
 Of man, as on a mount of diamond,
 set;¹
 For thou wert, and thine all-creative
 skill
 Peopled, with forms that mock the eternal
 dead
 In marble immortality, that hill²
 Which was thine earliest throne and latest
 oracle.

VI

"Within the surface of Time's fleeting river
 Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay
 Immovably unquiet, and for ever
 It trembles, but it cannot pass away!
 The voices of thy bards and sages thunder
 With an earth-awakening blast
 Through the caverns of the past
 (Religion veils her eyes; Oppression shrinks
 aghast):
 A wingéd sound of joy, and love, and won-
 der,
 Which soars where Expectation never
 flew,
 Rending the veil of space and time
 asunder!
 One ocean feeds the clouds, and streams,
 and dew;
 One Sun illumines Heaven; one Spirit vast
 With life and love makes chaos ever
 new,
 As Athens doth the world with thy delight
 renew.

VII

"Then Rome was, and from thy deep bosom
 fairest,
 Like a wolf-cub from a Cadmæan Mænad,³
 She drew the milk of greatness, though thy
 dearest⁴
 From that Elysian food was yet unweaned;
 And many a deed of terrible uprightness
 By thy sweet love was sanctified;
 And in thy smile, and by thy side,

¹*I.e.*, Athens was a state based on the will of its citizens.

²The Acropolis.

³See Euripides, *Bacchæ*, ll. 699-700. The Cadmæan Mænads are Theban followers of Bacchus, and are described by Euripides as nursing young wolves.

⁴Athens.

Saintly Camillus⁵ lived, and firm Atilius⁶
 died.

But when tears stained thy robe of vestal
 whiteness,
 And gold profaned thy Capitolian
 throne,
 Thou didst desert, with spirit-wingéd light-
 ness,
 The senate of the tyrants: they sunk
 prone
 Slaves of one tyrant: Palatinus⁷ sighed
 Faint echoes of Ionian song; that tone
 Thou didst delay to hear, lamenting to
 disown.

VIII

"From what Hyrcanian⁸ glen or frozen hill,
 Or piny promontory of the Arctic main,
 Or utmost islet inaccessible,
 Didst thou lament the ruin of thy reign,
 Teaching the woods and waves, and desert
 rocks,
 And every Naiad's ice-cold urn,
 To talk in echoes sad and stern
 Of that sublimest lore which man had dared
 unlearn?
 For neither didst thou watch the wizard
 flocks
 Of the Scald's dreams, nor haunt the
 Druid's sleep.
 What if the tears rained through thy
 shattered locks
 Were quickly dried? for thou didst
 groan, not weep,
 When from its sea of death, to kill and burn,
 The Galilean serpent⁹ forth did creep,
 And made thy world an undistinguishable
 heap.

IX

"A thousand years the Earth cried, 'Where
 art thou?'
 And then the shadow of thy coming fell
 On Saxon Alfred's¹⁰ olive-cinctured brow:
 And many a warrior-peopled citadel,

⁵A hero of republican Rome who defeated the Gauls under Brennus in 390 B. C.

⁶Generally called Regulus. He was captured by the Carthaginians but dissuaded the Senate from concluding a peace that would have saved his life (250 B. C.).

⁷One of the seven hills of Rome, on which was the residence of Augustus and later emperors.

⁸Persian province on the shore of the Caspian.

⁹Christianity.

¹⁰Alfred the Great.

Like rocks which fire lifts out of the flat deep,
 Arose in sacred Italy,
 Frowning o'er the tempestuous sea
 Of Kings, and priests, and slaves, in tower-
 crowned majesty;
 • That multitudinous anarchy did sweep
 And burst around their walls, like idle
 foam,
 Whilst from the human spirit's deepest
 deep
 Strange melody with love and awe
 struck dumb
 Dissonant arms; and Art, which cannot die,
 With divine wand traced on our earthly
 home
 Fit imagery to pave Heaven's everlasting
 dome.

X

"Thou huntress swifter than the Moon! thou
 terror
 Of the world's wolves! thou bearer of the
 quiver,
 Whose sunlike shafts pierce tempest-wingéd
 Error,
 • As light may pierce the clouds when they
 dissever
 In the calm regions of the orient day!
 Luther caught thy wakening glance;
 Like lightning, from his leaden lance
 Reflected, it dissolved the visions of the
 trance
 In which, as in a tomb, the nations lay;
 And England's prophets hailed thee as
 their queen,
 In songs whose music cannot pass away,
 Though it must flow for ever: not un-
 seen
 Before the spirit-sighted countenance
 Of Milton didst thou pass, from the sad
 scene
 Beyond whose night he saw, with a de-
 jected mien.

XI

"The eager hours and unreluctant years
 As on a dawn-illuminated mountain stood,
 Trampling to silence their loud hopes and
 fears,
 Darkening each other with their multi-
 tude,
 And cried aloud, 'Liberty!' Indignation
 Answered Pity from her cave;
 Death grew pale within the grave,

And Desolation howled to the destroyer,
 Save!
 When like Heaven's Sun girt by the exha-
 lation
 Of its own glorious light, thou didst
 arise,
 Chasing thy foes from nation unto nation
 Like shadows: as if day had cloven the
 skies
 At dreaming midnight o'er the western wave,
 Men started, staggering with a glad sur-
 prise,
 Under the lightnings of thine unfamiliar
 eyes.

XII

"Thou Heaven of earth! what spells could
 pall thee then
 In ominous eclipse? a thousand years
 Bred from the slime of deep Oppression's
 den,
 Dyed all thy liquid light with blood and
 tears,
 Till thy sweet stars could weep the stain
 away;
 How like Bacchanals of blood
 Round France, the ghastly vintage,
 stood
 Destruction's sceptered slaves, and Folly's
 mitered brood!
 When one,¹ like them, but mightier far
 than they,
 The Anarch of thine own bewildered
 powers,
 Rose: armies mingled in obscure array,
 Like clouds with clouds, darkening the
 sacred bowers
 Of serene Heaven. He, by the past pur-
 sued,
 Rests with those dead, but unforgotten
 hours,
 Whose ghosts scare victor kings in their
 ancestral towers.

XIII

"England yet sleeps: was she not called of
 old?
 Spain calls her now, as with its thrilling
 thunder
 Vesuvius wakens Ætna, and the cold
 Snow-crags by its reply are cloven in
 sunder:

¹Napoleon.

O'er the lit waves every Æolian isle¹
 From Pithecusa to Pelorus
 Howls, and leaps, and glares in chorus:
 They cry, 'Be dim; ye lamps of Heaven sus-
 pended o'er us!' Her² chains are threads of gold, she need
 but smile
 And they dissolve; but Spain's were
 links of steel,
 Till bit to dust by virtue's keenest file.
 Twins of a single destiny! appeal
 To the eternal years enthroned before us
 In the dim West; impress us from a seal,
 All ye have thought and done! Time
 cannot dare conceal.

XIV

"Tomb of Arminius!³ render up thy dead
 Till, like a standard from a watch-tower's
 staff,
 His soul may stream over the tyrant's head;
 Thy victory shall be his epitaph,
 Wild Bacchanal of truth's mysterious wine,
 King-deluded Germany,
 His dead spirit lives in thee.
 Why do we fear or hope? thou art already
 free!
 And thou, lost Paradise of this divine
 And glorious world! thou flowery wilder-
 ness!
 Thou island of eternity! thou shrine
 Where Desolation, clothed with loveli-
 ness,
 Worships the thing thou wert! O Italy,
 Gather thy blood into thy heart; repress
 The beasts who make their dens thy sacred
 palaces.

XV

"Oh, that the free would stamp the impious
 name
 Of KING into the dust! or write it there,
 So that this blot upon the page of fame
 Were as a serpent's path, which the light
 air
 Erases, and the flat sands close behind!
 Ye the oracle have heard:
 Lift the victory-flashing sword,

And cut the snaky knots of this foul gordian⁴
 word,
 Which, weak itself as stubble, yet can bind
 Into a mass, irrefragably firm,
 The axes and the rods which awe mankind;
 The sound has poison in it, 'tis the
 sperm
 Of what makes life foul, cankerous, and
 abhorred;
 Disdain not thou, at thine appointed term,
 To set thine armed heel on this reluctant
 worm.

XVI

"Oh, that the wise from their bright minds
 would kindle
 Such lamps within the dome of this dim
 world,
 That the pale name of PRIEST might shrink
 and dwindle
 Into the hell from which it first was hurled,
 A scoff of impious pride from fiends impure;
 Till human thoughts might kneel alone,
 Each before the judgment-throne
 Of its own aweless soul, or of the Power un-
 known!
 Oh, that the words which make the
 thoughts obscure
 From which they spring, as clouds of
 glimmering dew
 From a white lake blot Heaven's blue
 portraiture,
 Were stripped of their thin masks and
 various hue
 And frowns and smiles and splendors not
 their own,
 Till in the nakedness of false and true
 They stand before their Lord, each to re-
 ceive its due!

XVII

"He who taught man to vanquish whatsoever
 Can be between the cradle and the grave
 Crowned him the King of Life. Oh, vain
 endeavor!
 If on his own high will, a willing slave,
 He has enthroned the oppression and the
 oppressor.
 What if earth can clothe and feed
 Amplest millions at their need,
 And power in thought be as the tree within
 the seed?
 Or what if Art, an ardent intercessor,

¹Intricate.¹A group of islands north-east of Sicily. Pithecusa is an island outside the Bay of Naples, and Pelorus is a promontory north-east of Sicily.²England's.³He preserved the freedom of Germany in A. D. 9 by preventing the advance of the Romans beyond the Rhine.

Driving on fiery wings to Nature's throne,
Checks the great mother stooping to caress her,
And cries: 'Give me, thy child, dominion
Over all height and depth'? if Life can breed
New wants, and wealth from those who
toil and groan,
Rend of thy gifts and hers a thousandfold
for one!

XVIII

"Come thou, but lead out of the inmost cave
Of man's deep spirit, as the morning-star
Beckons the Sun from the Eoan wave,¹
Wisdom. I hear the pennons of her car
Self-moving, like cloud charioted by flame;
Comes she not, and come ye not,
Rulers of eternal thought,
To judge, with solemn truth, life's ill-
apportioned lot?
Blind Love, and equal Justice, and the
Fame
Of what has been, the Hope of what will
be?
• O Liberty! if such could be thy name
Wert thou disjoined from these, or they
from thee:
If thine or theirs were treasures to be bought
By blood or tears, have not the wise and
free
Wept tears, and blood like tears?"—The
solemn harmony

XIX

Paused, and the Spirit of that mighty sing-
ing
To its abyss was suddenly withdrawn;
Then, as a wild swan, when sublimely wing-
ing
Its path athwart the thunder-smoke of
dawn,
Sinks headlong through the ærial golden
light
On the heavy-sounding plain,
When the bolt has pierced its brain;
As summer clouds dissolve, unburthened of
their rain;
As a far taper fades with fading night,
As a brief insect dies with dying day,—
My song, its pinions disarrayed of might,
Drooped; o'er it closed the echoes far
away

¹The wave of dawn

Of the great voice which did its flight sustain,
As waves which lately paved his watery
way
Hiss round a drowner's head in their tem-
pestuous play.

ODE TO NAPLES²

EPODE I a

I STOOD within the City disinterred;³
And heard the autumnal leaves like light
footfalls
Of spirits passing through the streets; and
heard
The Mountain's⁴ slumberous voice at
intervals
Thrill through those roofless halls;
The oracular thunder penetrating shook
The listening soul in my suspended blood;
I felt that Earth out of her deep heart spoke—
I felt, but heard not:—through white
columns glowed
The isle-sustaining ocean-flood,
A plane of light between two heavens of
azure!
Around me gleamed many a bright sepul-
cher
Of whose pure beauty, Time, as if his
pleasure
Were to spare Death, had never made era-
sure;
But every living lineament was clear
As in the sculptor's thought; and there
The wreaths of stony myrtle, ivy, and pine,
Like winter leaves o'ergrown by molded
snow,
Seemed only not to move and grow
Because the crystal silence of the air
Weighed on their life; even as the Power
divine
Which then lulled all things, brooded upon
mine.

²Written in August, 1820; published in 1824. "The Author has connected many recollections of his visit to Pompeii and Baïæ with the enthusiasm excited by the intelligence of the proclamation of a Constitutional Government at Naples. This has given a tinge of picturesque and descriptive imagery to the introductory Epodes which depicture these scenes, and some of the majestic feelings permanently connected with the scene of this animating event" (Shelley's note).

³Pompeii.⁴Vesuvius.

EPODE II a

Then gentle winds arose
 With many a mingled close
 Of wild Æolian sound, and mountain-odors
 keen;
 And where the Baian ocean
 Welters with airlike motion,
 Within, above, around its bowers of starry
 green,
 Moving the sea-flowers in those purple
 caves,
 Even as the ever stormless atmos-
 phere
 Floats o'er the Elysian realm,
 It bore me, like an Angel, o'er the waves
 Of sunlight, whose swift pinnacle of
 dewy air
 No storm can overwhelm.
 I sailed, where ever flows
 Under the calm Serene
 A spirit of deep emotion
 From the unknown graves
 Of the dead Kings of Melody.¹
 Shadowy Aornos² darkened o'er the helm
 The horizontal æther; Heaven stripped
 bare
 Its depth over Elysium, where the prow
 Made the invisible water white as snow,
 From that Typhæan mount, Inarime,³
 There streamed a sunbright vapor, like the
 standard
 Of some ethereal host;
 Whilst from all the coast,
 Louder and louder, gathering round, there
 wandered
 Over the oracular woods and divine sea
 Propheysings which grew articulate—
 They seize me—I must speak them!—be they
 fate!

STROPHE I

Naples! thou Heart of men which ever pant-
 est
 Naked, beneath the lidless eye of Heaven!
 Elysian City, which to calm enchantest
 The mutinous air and sea! they round thee,
 even
 As sleep round Love, are driven!

¹Homer and Virgil (Shelley's note).

²Hades.

³An island north-west of the Bay of Naples contain-
 ing a volcanic mountain under which Typhon was said
 to be buried.

Metropolis of a ruined Paradise
 Long lost, late won, and yet but half re-
 gained!
 Bright Altar of the bloodless sacrifice,
 Which armed Victory offers up unstained
 To Love, the flower-enchained!
 Thou which wert once, and then didst cease
 to be,
 Now art, and henceforth ever shalt be, free,
 If Hope, and Truth, and Justice can
 avail,—
 Hail, hail, all hail!

STROPHE II

Thou youngest giant birth
 Which from the groaning earth
 Leap'st, clothed in armor of impenetrable
 scale!
 Last of the Intercessors!
 Who 'gainst the Crowned Transgressors
 Pleaded before God's love! Arrayed in
 Wisdom's mail,
 Wave thy lightning lance in mirth
 Nor let thy high heart fail,
 Though from their hundred gates the
 leagued Oppressors
 With hurried legions move!
 Hail, hail, all hail!

ANTISTROPHE I a

What though Cimmerian Anarchs⁴ dare
 blaspheme
 Freedom and thee? thy shield is as a
 mirror
 To make their blind slaves see, and with
 fierce gleam
 To turn his hungry sword upon the wearer;
 A new Actæon's⁵ error
 Shall theirs have been—devoured by their
 own hounds!
 Be thou like the imperial Basilisk⁶
 Killing thy foe with unapparent wounds!
 Gaze on Oppression, till at that dread risk
 Aghast she pass from the Earth's disk:
 Fear not, but gaze—for freemen mightier
 grow,
 And slaves more feeble, gazing on their foe:—
 If Hope, and Truth, and Justice may avail,
 Thou shalt be great—All hail!

⁴The Cimmerians, according to legend, dwelt in a
 northern land of perpetual darkness.

⁵Actæon was devoured by his own hounds after he had
 seen Artemis bathing.

⁶A monster who could slay by merely looking at its
 victim.

ANTISTROPHE II *α*

From Freedom's form divine,
From Nature's inmost shrine,

Strip every impious gawd, rend Error veil by
veil;

O'er Ruin desolate,
O'er Falsehood's fallen state,

Sit thou sublime, unawed; be the Destroyer
pale!

And equal laws be thine,
And wingéd words let sail,

Freighted with truth even from the throne of
God:

That wealth, surviving fate,
Be thine.—All hail!

ANTISTROPHE I *β*

Didst thou not start to hear Spain's thrilling
pean

From land to land re-echoed solemnly,
Till silence became music? From the
Ææan¹

To the cold Alps, eternal Italy
Starts to hear thine! The Sea

Which paves the desert streets of Venice
laughs

In light and music; widowed Genoa wan
By moonlight spells ancestral epitaphs,
Murmuring, "Where is Doria?"² fair
Milan,

Within whose veins long ran

The viper's³ palsyng venom, lifts her heel
To bruise his head. The signal and the seal
(If Hope and Truth and Justice can avail)
Art thou of all these hopes.—O hail!

ANTISTROPHE II *β*

Florence! beneath the sun,
Of cities fairest one,

Blushes within her bower for Freedom's
expectation:

From eyes of quenchless hope
Rome tears the priestly cope,

As ruling once by power, so now by admi-
ration,—

An athlete stripped to run
From a remoter station

¹The island of Circe (Shelley's note).

²Andrea Doria, an admiral who victoriously fought, early in the sixteenth century, for the independence of Genoa.

³The viper was the armorial device of the Visconti, tyrants of Milan (Shelley's note).

For the high prize lost on Philippi's shore:⁴—
As then Hope, Truth, and Justice did avail,
So now may Fraud and Wrong! O hail!

EPODE I *β*

Hear ye the march as of the Earth-born
Forms⁵

Arrayed against the ever-living Gods?

The crash and darkness of a thousand storms
Bursting their inaccessible abodes

Of crags and thunder-clouds?

See ye the banners blazoned to the day,
Inwrought with emblems of barbaric
pride?

Dissonant threats kill Silence far away,
The serene Heaven which wraps our Eden
wide

With iron light is dyed;

The Anarchs of the North⁶ lead forth their
legions

Like Chaos o'er creation, uncreating;

An hundred tribes nourished on strange
religions

And lawless slaveries,—down the aërial
regions

Of the white Alps, desolating,

Famished wolves that bide no waiting,

Blotting the glowing footsteps of old glory,
Trampling our columned cities into dust,

Their dull and savage lust

On Beauty's corse to sickness satiating—
They come! The fields they tread look black
and hoary

With fire—from their red feet the streams
run gory!

EPODE II *β*

Great Spirit, deepest Love!

Which rulest and dost move

All things which live and are, within the
Italian shore;

Who spreadest Heaven around it,

Whose woods, rocks, waves, surround it;

Who sittest in thy star, o'er Ocean's western
floor;

Spirit of beauty! at whose soft command

The sunbeams and the showers distil its
foison

From the Earth's bosom chill;

Oh, bid those beams be each a blinding brand

⁴Brutus and Cassius at Philippi fought vainly for republican Rome against Octavius (42 B. C.).

⁵The Titans, sons of Earth, who warred on the gods.

⁶Austria and other countries.

Of lightning! bid those showers be dews of
poison!

Bid the Earth's plenty kill!
Bid thy bright Heaven above,
Whilst light and darkness bound it,
Be their tomb who planned
To make it ours and thine!

Or, with thine harmonizing ardors fill
And raise thy sons, as o'er the prone horizon
Thy lamp feeds every twilight wave with fire—
Be man's high hope and unextinct desire
The instrument to work thy will divine!

Then clouds from sunbeams, antelopes
from leopards,

And frowns and fears from thee,
Would not more swiftly flee

Than Celtic wolves from the Ausonian¹
shepherds.—

Whatever, Spirit, from thy starry shrine
Thou yieldest or withholdest, oh, let be
This city of thy worship ever free!

SONNET²

YE HASTEN to the grave! What seek ye there,
Ye restless thoughts and busy purposes
Of the idle brain, which the world's livery
wear?

O thou quick heart, which pantest to possess
All that pale Expectation feigneth fair!
Thou vainly curious mind which wouldest
guss

Whence thou didst come, and whither thou
must go,
And all that never yet was known would
know—

Oh, whither hasten ye, that thus ye press,
With such swift feet life's green and pleasant
path,

Seeking, alike from happiness and woe,
A refuge in the cavern of gray death?
O heart, and mind, and thoughts! what thing
do you

Hope to inherit in the grave below?

GOOD-NIGHT³

I

GOOD-NIGHT? ah! no; the hour is ill
Which severs those it should unite;
Let us remain together still,
Then it will be *good* night.

¹Italian.

²Written in 1820, published by Leigh Hunt in 1823.

³Written in 1820, published by Hunt in 1822.

II

How can I call the lone night good,
Though thy sweet wishes wing its flight?
Be it not said, thought, understood—
Then it will be—*good* night.

III

To hearts which near each other move
From evening close to morning light,
The night is good; because, my love,
They never *say* good-night.

TO NIGHT⁴

I

SWIFTLY walk o'er the western wave,
Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where, all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear,—
Swift be thy flight!

II

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,
Star-inwrought!
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day;
Kiss her until she be wearied out,
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand—
Come, long-sought!

III

When I arose and saw the dawn,
I sighed for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And moon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turned to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,
I sighed for thee.

IV

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
Wouldst thou me?
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmured like a noontide bee,
Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me?—And I replied,
No, not thee!

⁴Written in 1821, published in 1824.

v

Death will come when thou art dead,
 Soon, too soon—
 Sleep will come when thou art fled;
 Of neither would I ask the boon
 I ask of thee, beloved Night—
 Swift be thine approaching flight,
 Come soon, soon!

TIME¹

UNFATHOMABLE Sea! whose waves are years,
 Ocean of Time, whose waters of deep woe
 Are brackish with the salt of human tears!
 Thou shoreless flood, which in thy ebb and
 flow
 Claspest the limits of mortality,
 And sick of prey, yet howling on for more,
 Vomitest thy wrecks on its inhospitable
 shore;
 Treacherous in calm, and terrible in storm,
 Who shall put forth on thee,
 Unfathomable Sea?

TO ———²

MUSIC, when soft voices die,
 Vibrates in the memory—
 Odors, when sweet violets sicken,
 Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
 Are heaped for the beloved's bed;
 And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
 Love itself shall slumber on.

SONG³

I

RARELY, rarely, comest thou,
 Spirit of Delight!
 Wherefore hast thou left me now
 Many a day and night?
 Many a weary night and day
 'Tis since thou art fled away.

II

How shall ever one like me
 Win thee back again?
 With the joyous and the free
 Thou wilt scoff at pain.

¹Written in 1821, published in 1824.

²Written in 1821, published in 1824.

³Written in 1821, published in 1824.

Spirit false! thou hast forgot
 All but those who need thee not.

III

As a lizard with the shade
 Of a trembling leaf,
 Thou with sorrow art dismayed;
 Even the sighs of grief
 Reproach thee, that thou art not near,
 And reproach thou wilt not hear.

IV

Let me set my mournful ditty
 To a merry measure;
 Thou wilt never come for pity,
 Thou wilt come for pleasure;
 Pity then will cut away
 Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay.

v

I love all that thou lovest,
 Spirit of Delight!
 The fresh Earth in new leaves dressed,
 And the starry night;
 Autumn evening, and the morn
 When the golden mists are born.

VI

I love snow, and all the forms
 Of the radiant frost;
 I love waves, and winds, and storms,
 Everything almost
 Which is Nature's, and may be
 Untainted by man's misery.

VII

I love tranquil solitude,
 And such society
 As is quiet, wise, and good;
 Between thee and me
 What difference? but thou dost possess
 The things I seek, not love them less.

VIII

I love Love—though he has wings,
 And like light can flee,
 But above all other things,
 Spirit, I love thee—
 Thou art love and life! Oh, come,
 Make once more my heart thy home.

MUTABILITY¹

I

THE flower that smiles to-day
 To-morrow dies;
 All that we wish to stay
 Tempts and then flies.
 What is this world's delight?
 Lightning that mocks the night,
 Brief even as bright.

II

Virtue, how frail it is!
 Friendship how rare!
 Love, how it sells poor bliss
 For proud despair!
 But we, though soon they fall,
 Survive their joy, and all
 Which ours we call.

III

Whilst skies are blue and bright,
 Whilst flowers are gay,
 Whilst eyes that change ere night
 Make glad the day;
 Whilst yet the calm hours creep,
 Dream thou—and from thy sleep
 Then wake to weep.

POLITICAL GREATNESS²

NOR happiness, nor majesty, nor fame,
 Nor peace, nor strength, nor skill in arms or
 arts,
 Shepherd those herds whom tyranny makes
 tame;
 Verse echoes not one beating of their hearts,
 History is but the shadow of their shame,
 Art veils her glass, or from the pageant starts
 As to oblivion their blind millions fleet,
 Staining that Heaven with obscene imagery
 Of their own likeness. What are numbers
 knit
 By force or custom? Man who man would
 be,
 Must rule the empire of himself; in it

¹Written in 1821, published in 1824.²Written in 1821, published in 1824.

Must be supreme, establishing his throne
 On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy
 Of hopes and fears, being himself alone.

A LAMENT³

I

O WORLD! O life! O time!
 On whose last steps I climb,
 Trembling at that where I had stood
 before;
 When will return the glory of your prime?
 No more—Oh, never more!

II

Out of the day and night
 A joy has taken flight;
 Fresh spring, and summer, and winter
 hoar,
 Move my faint heart with grief, but with de-
 light
 No more—Oh, never more!

TO——⁴

I

ONE word is too often profaned
 For me to profane it,
 One feeling too falsely disdained
 For thee to disdain it;
 One hope is too like despair
 For prudence to smother,
 And pity from thee more dear
 Than that from another.

II

I can give not what men call love,
 But wilt thou accept not
 The worship the heart lifts above
 And the Heavens reject not,—
 The desire of the moth for the star,
 Of the night for the morrow,
 The devotion to something afar
 From the sphere of our sorrow?

³Written in 1821, published in 1824.⁴Written in 1821, published in 1824.

EPIPSYCHIDION¹

VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE NOBLE AND UN-
FORTUNATE LADY, EMILIA V——, NOW
IMPRISONED IN THE CONVENT OF —

*L'anima amante si slancia fuori del creato, e si
crea nell' infinito un Mondo tutto per essa, diverso
assai da questo oscuro e pauroso baratro.*²

—Her own words.

My song, I fear that thou wilt find but few
Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning,
Of such hard matter dost thou entertain;
Whence, if by misadventure, chance should bring
Thee to base company (as chance may do),
Quite unaware of what thou dost contain,
I prithee, comfort thy sweet self again,
My last delight! tell them that they are dull,
And bid them own that thou art beautiful.

ADVERTISEMENT

THE Writer of the following lines died at
Florence, as he was preparing for a voyage to
one of the wildest of the Sporades, which he
had bought, and where he had fitted up the
ruins of an old building, and where it was his

Written early in 1821 and published in the summer
of the same year. The title is a Greek word coined by
Shelley to convey the expression "this soul out of my
soul," which occurs in the poem—*i.e.*, this soul com-
plementary to, or responsive to, my soul. The "noble
and unfortunate lady" was Emilia Viviani, a young and
beautiful Italian girl whose family had placed her against
her will in the convent of St. Anna, near Pisa. When
Shelley became acquainted with her and her story,
she soon seemed to him "a type and symbol of what
Goethe names 'the eternal feminine,' a type and symbol
of all that is most radiant and divine in nature, all that
is most remote and unattainable, yet ever to be pur-
sued—the ideal of truth, beauty, and love. She was at
once a living and breathing woman, young, lovely,
ardent, afflicted, and the avator of the Ideal" (Dowden,
Life of Shelley, II, 378). *Epipsychidion* is Shelley's
expression of this feeling, which will be the better un-
derstood for a reading of Plato's *Symposium*. Shelley
was quickly disillusioned about Emilia. He was soon
writing of the poem to a friend, "The person whom it
celebrates was a cloud instead of a Juno; and poor Ixion
starts from the Centaur that was the offspring of his
own embrace. If you are curious, however, to hear
what I am and have been, it will tell you something
thereof. It is an idealized history of my own life and
feelings. I think one is always in love with something
or other; the error—I confess it is not easy for spirits
cased in flesh and blood to avoid it—consists in seeking
in a mortal image the likeness of what is, perhaps,
eternal." In writing to another correspondent Shelley
sought to veil the circumstances which had occasioned
the poem: "The *Epipsychidion*," he wrote, "is a mys-
tery; as to real flesh and blood, you know that I do not
deal in these articles; you might as well go to a gin-
shop for a leg of mutton, as expect anything human

hope to have realized a scheme of life, suited
perhaps to that happier and better world
of which he is now an inhabitant, but hardly
practicable in this. His life was singular;
less on account of the romantic vicissitudes
which diversified it, than the ideal tinge
which it received from his own character and
feelings. The present Poem, like the *Vita
Nuova* of Dante, is sufficiently intelligible to
a certain class of readers without a matter-
of-fact history of the circumstances to which
it relates; and to a certain other class it must
ever remain incomprehensible, from a defect
of a common organ of perception for the
ideas of which it treats. Not but that *gran
vergogna sarebbe a colui, che rimasse cosa sotto
veste di figura, o di colore rettorico: e domanda-
to non sapesse denudare le sue parole da cotal
veste, in guisa che avessero verace intendi-
mento.*³

The present poem appears to have been in-
tended by the Writer as the dedication to
some longer one. The stanza on the op-
posite page⁴ is almost a literal translation
from Dante's famous Canzone

*Voi, ch' intendendo, il terzo ciel movete,
etc.*⁵

The presumptuous application of the con-
cluding lines to his own composition will
raise a smile at the expense of my unfortu-
nate friend: be it a smile not of contempt, but
pity. S.

and earthly from me." He was, indeed, anxious to
avoid gossip, and to this end published the poem anon-
ymously, prefixing to it the "Advertisement" printed
above, in which he gives some account of the imaginary
author.

²The soul of him who loves launches itself out of the
created, and creates in the infinite a world for itself,
and for itself alone, how different from this obscure and
fearful den (Medwin's translation). These words come
from an essay (*Il Vero Amore*, True Love) written by
Emilia after reading Plato's *Symposium*.

³Great were his shame who should rhyme anything
under a garb of metaphor or rhetorical color, and then,
being asked, should be incapable of stripping his words
of this garb so that they might have a veritable meaning
(From Dante's *Vita Nuova*, xxv, Rossetti's transla-
tion).

⁴*I. e.*, the stanza here printed immediately above the
"Advertisement."

⁵The first Canzone of the *Convito*. Shelley's stanza
is a translation of its concluding lines.

SWEET Spirit! Sister of that orphan one,¹
Whose empire is the name² thou weapest on,
In my heart's temple I suspend to thee
These votive wreaths of withered memory.

Poor captive bird! who, from thy narrow
cage,
Pourest such music, that it might assuage
The rugged hearts of those who prisoned
thee,
Were they not deaf to all sweet melody;
This song shall be thy rose: its petals pale
Are dead, indeed, my adored Nightingale!
But soft and fragrant is the faded blossom,
And it has no thorn left to wound thy bosom.

High, spirit-wingéd Heart! who dost for
ever
Beat thine unfeeling bars with vain endeavor,
Till those bright plumes of thought, in which
arrayed
It over-soared this low and worldly shade,
Lie shattered; and thy panting, wounded
breast
Stains with dear blood its unmaternal nest!
I weep vain tears: blood would less bitter be,
Yet poured forth gladlier, could it profit thee.

Seraph of Heaven! too gentle to be human,
Veiling beneath that radiant form of Woman
All that is insupportable in thee
Of light, and love, and immortality!
Sweet Benediction in the eternal Curse!
Veiled Glory of this lampless Universe!
Thou Moon beyond the clouds! Thou liv-
ing Form
Among the Dead! Thou Star above the
Storm!
Thou Wonder, and thou Beauty, and thou
Terror!
Thou Harmony of Nature's art! Thou Mirror
In whom, as in the splendor of the Sun,
All shapes look glorious which thou gazest
on!
Ay, even the dim words which obscure thee
now
Flash, lightning-like, with unaccustomed
glow;
I pray thee that thou blot from this sad song
All of its much mortality and wrong,

With those clear drops, which start like
sacred dew
From the twin lights thy sweet soul darkens
through,
Weeping, till sorrow becomes ecstasy:
Then smile on it, so that it may not die.

I never thought before my death to see
Youth's vision thus made perfect. Emily,
I love thee; though the world by no thin
name
Will hide that love from its unvalued shame.
Would we two had been twins of the same
mother!
Or, that the name my heart lent to an-
other³
Could be a sister's bond for her and thee,
Blending two beams of one eternity!
Yet were one lawful and the other true,⁴
These names, though dear, could paint not,
as is due,
How beyond refuge I am thine. Ah me!
I am not thine: I am a part of *thee*.

Sweet Lamp! my moth-like Muse has
burned its wings
Or, like a dying swan who soars and sings,
Young Love should teach Time, in his own
gray style,
All that thou art. Art thou not void of
guile,
A lovely soul formed to be blessed and bless?
A well of sealed and secret happiness,
Whose waters like blithe light and music
are,
Vanquishing dissonance and gloom? A
Star
Which moves not in the moving heavens,
alone?
A Smile amid dark frowns? a gentle tone
Amid rude voices? a beloved light?
A Solitude, a Refuge, a Delight?
A Lute, which those whom Love has taught
to play
Make music on, to soothe the roughest day
And lull fond Grief asleep? a buried treasure?
A cradle of young thoughts of wingless
pleasure?
A violet-shrouded grave of Woe?—I measure
The world of fancies, seeking one like thee,
And find—alas! mine own infirmity.

¹Mary Shelley. Her mother had died in giving birth to her.

²Shelley himself.

³To Mary Shelley.

⁴*I.e.*, wife and sister.

She met me, Stranger, upon life's rough
 way,
 And lured me towards sweet Death; as
 Night by Day,
 Winter by Spring, or Sorrow by swift Hope,
 Led into light, life, peace. An antelope,
 In the suspended impulse of its lightness,
 Were less ethereally light: the brightness
 Of her divinest presence trembles through
 Her limbs, as underneath a cloud of dew
 Embodied in the windless heaven of June
 Amid the splendor-winged stars, the Moon
 Burns, inextinguishably beautiful:
 And from her lips, as from a hyacinth full
 Of honey-dew, a liquid murmur drops,
 Killing the sense with passion; sweet as stops
 Of planetary music heard in trance.
 In her mild lights the starry spirits dance,
 The sunbeams of those wells which ever leap
 Under the lightnings of the soul—too deep
 For the brief fathom-line of thought or
 sense.
 The glory of her being, issuing thence,
 Stains the dead, blank, cold air with a warm
 shade
 Of unentangled intermixture, made
 By Love, of light and motion: one intense
 Diffusion, one serene Omnipresence,
 Whose flowing outlines mingle in their flow-
 ing,
 Around her cheeks and utmost fingers
 glowing
 With the unintermitted blood, which there
 Quivers (as in a fleece of snow-like air
 The crimson pulse of living morning quiver),
 Continuously prolonged, and ending never,
 Till they are lost, and in that Beauty furled
 Which penetrates and clasps and fills the
 world;
 Scarce visible from extreme loveliness.
 Warm fragrance seems to fall from her light
 dress
 And her loose hair; and where some heavy
 tress
 The air of her own speed has disentwined,
 The sweetness seems to satiate the faint
 wind;
 And in the soul a wild odor is felt,
 Beyond the sense, like fiery dews that melt
 Into the bosom of a frozen bud.—
 See where she stands! a mortal shape indued
 With love and life and light and deity,
 And motion which may change but cannot
 die;

An image of some bright Eternity;
 A shadow of some golden dream; a Splendor
 Leaving the third sphere pilotless;¹ a tender
 Reflection of the eternal Moon of Love
 Under whose motions life's dull billows
 move;
 A Metaphor of Spring and Youth and Morn-
 ing;
 A Vision like incarnate April, warning,
 With smiles and tears, Frost the Anatomy²
 Into his summer grave.

Ah, woe is me!

What have I dared? where am I lifted? how
 Shall I descend, and perish not? I know
 That Love makes all things equal: I have
 heard
 By mine own heart this joyous truth averred:
 The spirit of the worm beneath the sod
 In love and worship, blends itself with God.

Spouse! Sister! Angel! Pilot of the Fate³
 Whose course has been so starless! O too late
 Belovéd! O too soon adored, by me!
 For in the fields of Immortality
 My spirit should at first have worshiped
 thine,
 A divine presence in a place divine;
 Or should have moved beside it on this earth,
 A shadow of that substance, from its birth;
 But not as now:—I love thee; yes, I feel
 That on the fountain of my heart a seal
 Is set, to keep its waters pure and bright
 For thee, since in those *tears* thou hast de-
 light.
 We—are we not formed, as notes of music
 are,
 For one another, though dissimilar;
 Such difference without discord, as can
 make
 Those sweetest sounds, in which all spirits
 shake
 As trembling leaves in a continuous air?

Thy wisdom speaks in me, and bids me
 dare
 Beacon the rocks on which high hearts are
 wrecked.
 I never was attached to that great sect,

¹In the Ptolemaic astronomy the third of the con-
 centric spheres surrounding the earth was that of
 Venus. Shelley implies that Venus has taken earthly
 form in Emilia, and in so doing has left her sphere
 pilotless.

²Frost the skeleton.

³Shelley's fate.

Whose doctrine is, that each one should
 select
 Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,
 And all the rest, though fair and wise,
 commend
 To cold oblivion, though it is in the code
 Of modern morals, and the beaten road
 Which those poor slaves with weary foot-
 steps tread,
 Who travel to their home among the dead
 By the broad highway of the world, and so
 With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous
 foe,
 The dreariest and the longest journey go.

True Love in this differs from gold and
 clay,
 That to divide is not to take away.
 Love is like understanding, that grows
 bright,
 Gazing on many truths; 'tis like thy light,
 Imagination! which from earth and sky,
 And from the depths of human fantasy,
 As from a thousand prisms and mirrors,
 fills
 The Universe with glorious beams, and kills
 Error, the worm, with many a sun-like arrow
 Of its reverberated lightning. Narrow
 The heart that loves, the brain that contem-
 plates,
 The life that wears, the spirit that creates
 One object, and one form, and builds thereby
 A sepulcher for its eternity.

Mind from its object differs most in this:
 Evil from good; misery from happiness;
 The baser from the nobler; the impure
 And frail, from what is clear and must en-
 dure.
 If you divide suffering and dross, you may
 Diminish till it is consumed away;
 If you divide pleasure and love and thought,
 Each part exceeds the whole; and we know
 not
 How much, while any yet remains unshared,
 Of pleasure may be gained, of sorrow spared:
 This truth is that deep well, whence sages
 draw
 The unenvied light of hope; the eternal law
 By which those live, to whom this world of
 life
 Is as a garden ravaged, and whose strife
 Tills for the promise of a later birth
 The wilderness of this Elysian earth.

There was a Being¹ whom my spirit oft
 Met on its visioned wanderings, far aloft,
 In the clear golden prime of my youth's
 dawn,
 Upon the fairy isles of sunny lawn,
 Amid the enchanted mountains, and the
 caves
 Of divine sleep, and on the air-like waves
 Of wonder-level dream, whose tremulous
 floor
 Paved her light steps;—on an imagined
 shore,
 Under the gray beak of some promontory
 She met me, robed in such exceeding glory,
 That I beheld her not. In solitudes
 Her voice came to me through the whisper-
 ing woods,
 And from the fountains, and the odors deep
 Of flowers, which, like lips murmuring in
 their sleep
 Of the sweet kisses which had lulled them
 there,
 Breathed but of *her* to the enamored air;
 And from the breezes whether low or loud,
 And from the rain of every passing cloud,
 And from the singing of the summer-birds,
 And from all sounds, all silence; in the words
 Of antique verse and high romance,—in
 form,
 Sound, color—in whatever checks that storm
 Which with the shattered present chokes
 the past;
 And in that best philosophy, whose taste
 Makes this cold common hell, our life, a
 doom
 As glorious as a fiery martyrdom;
 Her Spirit was the harmony of truth.—

Then, from the caverns of my dreamy
 youth
 I sprang, as one sandaled with plumes of
 fire,
 And towards the lodestar of my one desire,
 I flitted, like a dizzy moth, whose flight
 Is as a dead leaf's in the owlet light,
 When it would seek in Hesper's setting
 sphere²
 A radiant death, a fiery sepulcher,
 As if it were a lamp of earthly flame.—
 But She, whom prayers or tears then could
 not tame,

¹This Being is described in *Alastor*. See also the
Hymn to Intellectual Beauty, above.

²In the Evening Star.

Passed, like a God throned on a wingéd
 planet,
 Whose burning plumes to tenfold swiftness
 fan it,
 Into the dreary cone of our life's shade;
 And as a man with mighty loss dismayed,
 I would have followed, though the grave be-
 tween
 Yawned like a gulf whose specters are un-
 seen:
 When a voice said:—"O thou of hearts the
 weakest,
 The phantom is beside thee whom thou
 seekest."
 Then I—"Where?"—the world's echo an-
 swered "where?"
 And in that silence, and in my despair,
 I questioned every tongueless wind that flew
 Over my tower of mourning, if it knew
 Whither 'twas fled, this soul out of my soul;
 And murmured names and spells which
 have control
 Over the sightless¹ tyrants of our fate;
 But neither prayer nor verse could dissipate
 The night which closed on her; nor uncreate
 That world within this Chaos, mine and me,
 Of which she was the veiled Divinity,
 The world I say of thoughts that worshiped
 her:
 And therefore I went forth, with hope and
 fear
 And every gentle passion sick to death,
 Feeding my course with expectation's breath,
 Into the wintry forest of our life;
 And struggling through its error with vain
 strife,
 And stumbling in my weakness and my
 haste,
 And half bewildered by new forms, I passed,
 Seeking among those untaught foresters
 If I could find one form resembling hers,
 In which she might have masked herself from
 me.
 There,—One, whose voice was venoméd
 melody
 Sat by a well, under blue nightshade bowers;
 The breath of her false mouth was like faint
 flowers,
 Her touch was as electric poison,—flame
 Out of her looks into my vitals came,
 And from her living cheeks and bosom flew
 A killing air, which pierced like honey-dew²

¹Invisible.

²Which blights the leaves on which it is formed.

Into the core of my green heart, and lay
 Upon its leaves; until, as hair grown gray
 O'er a young brow, they hid its unblown
 prime
 With ruins of unseasonable time.

In many mortal forms I rashly sought
 The shadow of that idol of my thought.
 And some were fair—but beauty dies away:
 Others were wise—but honeyed words be-
 tray:

And One was true—oh! why not true to me?
 Then, as a hunted deer that could not flee,
 I turned upon my thoughts, and stood at
 bay,
 Wounded and weak and panting; the cold
 day
 Trembled, for pity of my strife and pain.
 When, like a noonday dawn, there shone
 again

Deliverance. One³ stood on my path who
 seemed

As like the glorious shape which I had
 dreamed

As is the Moon, whose changes ever run
 Into themselves, to the eternal Sun;
 The cold chaste Moon, the Queen of
 Heaven's bright isles,

Who makes all beautiful on which she smiles,
 That wandering shrine of soft yet icy flame
 Which ever is transformed, yet still the same,
 And warms not but illumines. Young and
 fair

As the descended Spirit of that sphere,
 She hid me, as the Moon may hide the
 night

From its own darkness, until all was bright
 Between the Heaven and Earth of my calm
 mind,

And, as a cloud charioted by the wind,
 She led me to a cave in that wild place,
 And sat beside me, with her downward face
 Illumining my slumbers, like the Moon
 Waxing and waning o'er Endymion.

And I was laid asleep, spirit and limb,
 And all my being became bright or dim
 As the Moon's image in a summer sea,
 According as she smiled or frowned on me;
 And there I lay, within a chaste cold bed:
 Alas, I then was nor alive nor dead:—
 For at her silver voice came Death and Life,
 Unmindful each of their accustomed strife,

³I.e., Mary Shelley.

Masked like twin babes, a sister and a brother,
 The wandering hopes of one abandoned mother,
 And through the cavern without wings they flew,
 And cried "Away, he is not of our crew."
 I wept, and though it be a dream, I weep.

What storms then shook the ocean of my sleep,
 Blotting that Moon, whose pale and waning lips
 Then shrank as in the sickness of eclipse;—
 And how my soul was as a lampless sea,
 And who was then its Tempest; and when She,
 The Planet of that hour, was quenched, what frost
 Crept o'er those waters, till from coast to coast
 The moving billows of my being fell
 Into a death of ice, immovable;—
 And then—what earthquakes made it gape and split,
 The white Moon smiling all the while on it,
 These words conceal:—If not, each word would be
 The key of staunchless tears. Weep not for me!

At length, into the obscure Forest came
 The Vision I had sought through grief and shame.
 Athwart that wintry wilderness of thorns
 Flashed from her motion splendor like the Morn's,
 And from her presence life was radiated
 Through the gray earth and branches bare and dead;
 So that her way was paved, and roofed above
 With flowers as soft as thoughts of budding love;
 And music from her respiration spread
 Like light,—all other sounds were penetrated
 By the small, still, sweet spirit of that sound,
 So that the savage winds hung mute around;
 And odors warm and fresh fell from her hair
 Dissolving the dull cold in the froze air:
 Soft as an Incarnation of the Sun,
 When light is changed to love, this glorious One

Floated into the cavern where I lay,
 And called my Spirit, and the dreaming clay
 Was lifted by the thing that dreamed below
 As smoke by fire, and in her beauty's glow
 I stood, and felt the dawn of my long night
 Was penetrating me with living light:
 I knew it was the Vision veiled from me
 So many years—that it was Emily.

Twin Spheres of light who rule this passive Earth,¹
 This world of love, this *me*; and into birth
 Awaken all its fruits and flowers, and dart
 Magnetic might into its central heart;
 And lift its billows and its mists, and guide
 By everlasting laws, each wind and tide
 To its fit cloud, and its appointed cave;
 And lull its storms, each in the craggy grave
 Which was its cradle, luring to faint bowers
 The armies of the rainbow-wingéd showers;
 And, as those married lights, which from the towers
 Of Heaven look forth and fold the wandering globe
 In liquid sleep and splendor, as a robe;
 And all their many-mingled influence blend,
 If equal, yet unlike, to one sweet end;—
 So ye, bright regents, with alternate sway
 Govern my sphere of being, night and day!
 Thou, not disdaining even a borrowed might;
 Thou, not eclipsing a remoter light;
 And, through the shadow of the seasons three,
 From Spring to Autumn's sere maturity,
 Light it into the Winter of the tomb,
 Where it may ripen to a brighter bloom.
 Thou too, O Comet beautiful and fierce,²
 Who drew the heart of this frail Universe
 Towards thine own; till, wrecked in that convulsion,
 Alternating attraction and repulsion,
 Thine went astray and that was rent in twain;
 Oh, float into our azure heaven again!
 Be there Love's folding-star³ at thy return;
 The living Sun will feed thee from its urn
 Of golden fire; the Moon will veil her horn
 In thy last smiles; adoring Even and Morn

¹The Sun and Moon—Emilia and Mary.

²The person meant is not known, though various guesses have been made.

³Evening Star.

Will worship thee with incense of calm
breath

And lights and shadows; as the star of Death
And Birth is worshiped by those sisters
wild

Called Hope and Fear—upon the heart are
piled

Their offerings,—of this sacrifice divine
A World shall be the altar.

Lady mine,

Scorn not these flowers of thought, the fad-
ing birth

Which from its heart of hearts that plant
puts forth

Whose fruit, made perfect by thy sunny
eyes,

Will be as of the trees of Paradise.

The day is come, and thou wilt fly with me.
To whatsoever of dull mortality
Is mine, remain a vestal sister still;
To the intense, the deep, the imperishable,
Not mine but me, henceforth be thou united
Even as a bride, delighting and delighted.
The hour is come:—the destined Star has
risen

Which shall descend upon a vacant prison.
The walls are high, the gates are strong,
thick set

The sentinels—but true Love never yet
Was thus constrained: it overleaps all fence:
Like lightning, with invisible violence
Piercing its continents;¹ like Heaven's free
breath,

Which he who grasps can hold not: liker
Death,

Who rides upon a thought, and makes his
way

Through temple, tower, and palace, and the
array

Of arms: more strength has Love than he or
they;

For it can burst his charnel, and make free
The limbs in chains, the heart in agony,
The soul in dust and chaos.

Emily,

A ship is floating in the harbor now,
A wind is hovering o'er the mountain's
brow;

There is a path on the sea's azure floor,
No keel has ever ploughed that path be-
fore;

The halcyons² brood around the foamless
isles;

The treacherous Ocean has forsworn its
wiles;

The merry mariners are bold and free:
Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with me?

Our bark is as an albatross, whose nest

Is a far Eden of the purple East;

And we between her wings will sit, while
Night,

And Day, and Storm, and Calm, pursue
their flight,

Our ministers, along the boundless Sea,
Treading each other's heels, unheededly.

It is an isle under Ionian skies,

Beautiful as a wreck of Paradise,

And,—for the harbors are not safe and
good,—

This land would have remained a solitude
But for some pastoral people native there,
Who from the Elysian, clear, and golden
air

Draw the last spirit of the age of gold,
Simple and spirited; innocent and bold.

The blue Ægean girds this chosen home,
With ever-changing sound and light and
foam,

Kissing the sifted sands, and caverns hoar;
And all the winds wandering along the shore
Undulate with the undulating tide:

There are thick woods where sylvan forms
abide;

And many a fountain, rivulet, and pond,
As clear as elemental diamond,

Or serene morning air; and far beyond,
The mossy tracks made by the goats and
deer

(Which the rough shepherd treads but once
a year)

Pierce into glades, caverns, and bowers, and
halls

Built round with ivy, which the waterfalls
Illumining, with sound that never fails

Accompany the noonday nightingales;

And all the place is peopled with sweet airs;

The light clear element which the isle wears
Is heavy with the scent of lemon-flowers,
Which floats like mist laden with unseen
showers,

And falls upon the eyelids like faint sleep;

And from the moss violets and jonquils peep,

²Kingfishers. It was fabled that they nested upon
the sea in winter, tranquillizing its waters.

¹Receptacles.

And dart their arrowy odor through the
brain

Till you might faint with that delicious pain.
And every motion, odor, beam, and tone,
With that deep music is in unison:

Which is a soul within the soul—they seem
Like echoes of an antenatal dream.—

It is an isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth, and
Sea,

Cradled, and hung in clear tranquillity;
Bright as that wandering Eden Lucifer,¹
Washed by the soft blue Oceans of young
air.

It is a favored place. Famine or Blight,
Pestilence, War and Earthquake, never light
Upon its mountain-peaks; blind vultures,
they

Sail onward far upon their fatal way:
The wingéd storms, chanting their thunder-
psalm

To other lands, leave azure chasms of calm
Over this isle, or weep themselves in dew,
From which its fields and woods ever renew
Their green and golden immortality.

And from the sea there rise, and from the sky
There fall, clear exhalations, soft and bright,
Veil after veil, each hiding some delight,
Which Sun or Moon or zephyr draw aside,
Till the isle's beauty, like a naked bride
Glowing at once with love and loveliness,
Blushes and trembles at its own excess:
Yet, like a buried lamp, a Soul no less
Burns in the heart of this delicious isle,
An atom of th' Eternal, whose own smile
Unfolds itself, and may be felt, not seen
O'er the gray rocks, blue waves, and forests
green,

Filling their bare and void interstices.
But the chief marvel of the wilderness
Is a lone dwelling, built by whom or how
None of the rustic island-people know:
'Tis not a tower of strength, though with its
height

It overtops the woods; but, for delight,
Some wise and tender Ocean-King, ere crime
Had been invented, in the world's young
prime,

Reared it, a wonder of that simple time,
An envy of the isles, a pleasure-house
Made sacred to his sister and his spouse.
It scarce seems now a wreck of human art,
But, as it were Titanic; in the heart

Of Earth having assumed its form, then
grown

Out of the mountains, from the living stone,
Lifting itself in caverns light and high:

For all the antique and learned imagery
Has been erased, and in the place of it
The ivy and the wild-vine interknit

The volumes of their many-twining stems;
Parasite flowers illumine with dewy gems
The lampless halls, and when they fade, the
sky

Peeps through their winter-woof of tracery
With moonlight patches, or star atoms keen,
Or fragments of the day's intense serene;—
Working mosaic on their Parian floors.²
And, day and night, aloof, from the high
towers

And terraces, the Earth and Ocean seem
To sleep in one another's arms, and dream
Of waves, flowers, clouds, woods, rocks, and
all that we

Read in their smiles, and call reality.

This isle and house are mine, and I have
vowed

Thee to be lady of the solitude.—

And I have fitted up some chambers there
Looking towards the golden Eastern air,
And level with the living winds, which flow
Like waves above the living waves below.—
I have sent books and music there, and all
Those instruments with which high Spirits
call

The future from its cradle, and the past
Out of its grave, and make the present last
In thoughts and joys which sleep, but cannot
die,

Folded within their own eternity.

Our simple life wants little, and true taste
Hires not the pale drudge Luxury, to waste
The scene it would adorn, and therefore still,
Nature with all her children haunts the hill.
The ring-dove, in the embowering ivy, yet
Keeps up her love-lament, and the owls flit
Round the evening tower, and the young
stars glance

Between the quick bats in their twilight
dance;

The spotted deer bask in the fresh moonlight
Before our gate, and the slow, silent night
Is measured by the pants of their calm sleep.
Be this our home in life, and when years heap

¹The Morning Star.

²Floors made of Parian marble.

Their withered hours, like leaves, on our
 decay,
 Let us become the overhanging day,
 The living soul of this Elysian isle,
 Conscious, inseparable, one. Meanwhile
 We two will rise, and sit, and walk together,
 Under the roof of blue Ionian weather,
 And wander in the meadows, or ascend
 The mossy mountains, where the blue
 heavens bend
 With lightest winds, to touch their para-
 mour;
 Or linger, where the pebble-paven shore,
 Under the quick, faint kisses of the sea
 Trembles and sparkles as with ecstasy,—
 Possessing and possessed by all that is
 Within that calm circumference of bliss,
 And by each other, till to love and live
 Be one:—or, at the noontide hour, arrive
 Where some old cavern hoar seems yet to
 keep
 The moonlight of the expired night asleep,
 Through which the awakened day can never
 peep;
 A veil for our seclusion, close as night's,
 Where secure sleep may kill thine innocent
 lights;
 Sleep, the fresh dew of languid love, the rain
 Whose drops quench kisses till they burn
 again.
 And we will talk, until thought's melody
 Become too sweet for utterance, and it die
 In words, to live again in looks, which dart
 With thrilling tone into the voiceless heart,
 Harmonizing silence without a sound.
 Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms
 bound,
 And our veins beat together; and our lips
 With other eloquence than words, eclipse
 The soul that burns between them, and the
 wells
 Which boil under our being's inmost cells,
 The fountains of our deepest life, shall be
 Confused in Passion's golden purity,
 As mountain-springs under the morning sun.
 We shall become the same, we shall be one

Spirit within two frames, oh! wherefore two?
 One passion in twin-hearts, which grows and
 grew,
 Till like two meteors of expanding flame,
 Those spheres instinct with it become the
 same,
 Touch, mingle, are transfigured; ever still
 Burning, yet ever inconsumable:
 In one another's substance finding food,
 Like flames too pure and light and unimbued
 To nourish their bright lives with baser prey,
 Which point to Heaven and cannot pass
 away:
 One hope within two wills, one will beneath
 Two overshadowing minds, one life, one
 death,
 One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality,
 And one annihilation. Woe is me!
 The winged words on which my soul would
 pierce
 Into the height of Love's rare Universe,
 Are chains of lead around its flight of fire—
 I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire!

Weak Verses, go, kneel at your Sovereign's
 feet,
 And say:—"We are the masters of thy slave;
 What wouldest thou with us and ours and
 thine?"
 Then call your sisters from Oblivion's cave,
 All singing loud: "Love's very pain is sweet,
 But its reward is in the world divine
 Which, if not here, it builds beyond the
 grave."
 So shall ye live when I am there. Then
 haste
 Over the hearts of men, until ye meet
 Marina, Vanna, Primus,¹ and the rest,
 And bid them love each other and be
 blessed:
 And leave the troop which errs, and which
 reproves,
 And come and be my guest,—for I am
 Love's.

¹Mary Shelley and two friends who cannot certainly be identified from these names.

ADONAIS¹

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN
KEATS, AUTHOR OF *ENDYMION*,
HYPERION, ETC.

Ἀστὴρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες ἐνὶ ζωοῖσιν Ἔϋρος.
νῦν δὲ θανῶν λάμπεις Ἑσπερος ἐν φθιμένοισι.
—PLATO.²

PREFACE

Φάρμακον ἦλθε, Βίων, ποτὶ σὸν στόμα,
φάρμακον εἶδες.
πῶς τευ τοῖς χεῖλεσσι ποτέδραμε, κοῦκ
ἐγλυκάνθη;
τίς δὲ βροτὸς τοσσούτου ἀνάμερος, ἢ κεράσαι
τοί,
ἢ δοῦναι λαλέοντι τὸ φάρμακον; ἐκφυγεῖν
ὠδάν.—MOSCHUS, EPITAPH. BION.³

It is my intention to subjoin to the London edition of this poem a criticism upon the claims of its lamented object to be classed among the writers of the highest genius who have adorned our age. My known repug-

nance to the narrow principles of taste on which several of his earlier compositions were modeled prove at least that I am an impartial judge. I consider the fragment of *Hyperion* as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years.

John Keats died at Rome of a consumption, in his twenty-fourth year, on the — of — 1821; and was buried in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants in that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius, and the massy walls and towers, now moldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.

The genius of the lamented person to whose memory I have dedicated these unworthy verses was not less delicate and fragile than it was beautiful; and where cankerworms abound, what wonder if its young flower was blighted in the bud? The savage criticism on his *Endymion*, which appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a rapid consumption ensued, and the succeeding acknowledgments from more candid critics of the true greatness of his powers were ineffectual to heal the wound thus wantonly inflicted.

It may be well said that these wretched men know not what they do. They scatter their insults and their slanders without heed as to whether the poisoned shaft lights on a heart made callous by many blows or one like Keats's composed of more penetrable stuff. One of their associates is, to my knowledge, a most base and unprincipled calumniator. As to *Endymion*, was it a poem, whatever might be its defects, to be treated contemptuously by those who had celebrated, with various degrees of complacency and panegyric, *Paris*, and *Woman*, and a *Syrian Tale*, and Mrs. Lefanu, and Mr. Barrett, and Mr. Howard Payne, and a long list of the illustrious obscure? Are these the men who in their venal good nature presumed to draw a parallel between the Rev. Mr. Milman and Lord Byron? What

¹Written at Pisa during the early days of June, 1821, and published at Pisa in the middle of July in the same year. Part of the edition was sent to be sold in London, but there was, during Shelley's lifetime, no London edition such as is mentioned in the first sentence of the Preface. When he wrote the Preface Shelley did not know the exact time of Keats's death. He shared, too, the incorrect impression current at the time that adverse criticism had brought about Keats's illness. (Concerning this see the introductory note to Keats's poems, below.) Keats and Shelley had met each other at the house of Leigh Hunt, but had never seen much of each other. *Adonais* is not the result of a feeling of warm personal friendship so much as of Shelley's recognition of the similarity between his own life and that of Keats. While the poem was in progress he wrote: "I have been engaged these last days in composing a poem on the death of Keats, which will shortly be finished. . . . It is a highly wrought piece of art, and perhaps better in point of composition than anything I have written." The poem is modeled on the Greek pastoral elegy, and Shelley is particularly indebted to Bion's *Lament for Adonis* and Moschus's *Elegy on the Death of Bion*.

²Thou wert the morning star among the living,
Ere thy fair light had fled;—
Now, having died, thou art as Hesperus, giving
New splendor to the dead.

(Shelley's translation.)

³Poison came, Bion, to thy mouth—thou didst know poison. To such lips as thine did it come, and was not sweetened? What mortal was so cruel that could mix poison for thee, or who could give thee the venom that heard thy voice? Surely he had no music in his soul (Lang's translation).

gnat did they strain at here, after having swallowed all those camels? Against what woman taken in adultery dares the foremost of these literary prostitutes to cast his opprobrious stone? Miserable man! you, one of the meanest, have wantonly defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse, that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers, but used none.

The circumstances of the closing scene of poor Keats's life were not made known to me until the *Elegy* was ready for the press. I am given to understand that the wound which his sensitive spirit had received from the criticism of *Endymion* was exasperated by the bitter sense of unrequited benefits; the poor fellow seems to have been hooted from the stage of life, no less by those on whom he had wasted the promise of his genius, than those on whom he had lavished his fortune and his care. He was accompanied to Rome, and attended in his last illness by Mr. Severn, a young artist of the highest promise, who, I have been informed, "almost risked his own life, and sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance upon his dying friend." Had I known these circumstances before the completion of my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr. Severn can dispense with a reward from "such stuff as dreams are made of." His conduct is a golden augury of the success of his future career—may the unextinguished Spirit of his illustrious friend animate the creations of his pencil, and plead against Oblivion for his name!

I

I WEEP for Adonais—he is dead!
Oh, weep for Adonais! though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a
head!
And thou, sad Hour, selected from all
years
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure com-
peers,
And teach them thine own sorrow, say:
"With me
Died Adonais; till the Future dares

Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity!"

2

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when
he lay,
When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft
which flies
In darkness? where was lorn Urania¹
When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,
'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise
She sat, while one, with soft enamored
breath,
Rekindled all the fading melodies,
With which, like flowers that mock the
corse beneath,
He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of
Death.

3

Oh, weep for Adonais—he is dead!
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and
weep!
Yet wherefore? Quench within their
burning bed
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart
keep,
Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;
For he is gone, where all things wise and
fair
Descend;—oh, dream not that the amor-
ous Deep
Will yet restore him to the vital air;
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at
our despair.

4

Most musical of mourners, weep again!
Lament anew, Urania!—he² died,
Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,
Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's
pride,
The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,
Trampled and mocked with many a loathed
rite
Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,
Into the gulf of death; but his clear Sprite
Yet reigns o'er earth; the third³ among the
sons of light.

¹The heavenly muse, to whom Milton appeals in *Paradise Lost*, or, more probably, the Uranian Aphrodite, spirit of heavenly love.

²Milton.

³The first and second, if one may judge from Shelley's *Defense of Poetry*, were Homer and Dante.

5

Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
 Not all to that bright station dared to
 climb;
 And happier they their happiness who
 knew,
 Whose tapers yet burn through that night
 of time
 In which suns perished; others more sub-
 lime,
 Struck by the envious wrath of man or god,
 Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent
 prime;
 And some yet live, treading the thorny
 road,
 Which leads, through toil and hate, to
 Fame's serene abode.

6

But now, thy youngest, dearest one, has
 perished—
 The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
 Like a pale flower by some sad maiden
 cherished,
 And fed with true-love tears, instead of
 dew;
 Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
 Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the
 last,
 The bloom, whose petals, nipped before
 they blew,
 Died on the promise of the fruit, is
 waste;
 The broken lily lies—the storm is overpast.

7

To that high Capital,¹ where kingly Death
 Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
 He came; and bought, with price of purest
 breath,
 A grave among the eternal.—Come away!
 Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
 Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still
 He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;
 Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
 Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

8

He will awake no more, oh, never more!—
 Within the twilight chamber spreads apace
 The shadow of white Death, and at the
 door
 Invisible Corruption waits to trace

¹Rome.

His extreme way to her dim dwelling-
 place;
 The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
 Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to de-
 face
 So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law
 Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal
 curtain draw.

9

Oh, weep for Adonais!—The quick
 Dreams,
 The passion-winged Ministers of thought,
 Who were his flocks, whom near the living
 streams
 Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he
 taught
 The love which was its music, wander
 not,—
 Wander no more, from kindling brain to
 brain,
 But droop there, whence they sprung; and
 mourn their lot
 Round the cold heart, where, after their
 sweet pain,
 They ne'er will gather strength, or find a
 home again.

10

And one with trembling hands clasps his
 cold head,
 And fans him with her moonlight wings,
 and cries;
 "Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not
 dead;
 See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,
 Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
 A tear some Dream has loosened from his
 brain."
 Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise!
 She knew not 'twas her own; as with no
 stain
 She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its
 rain.

11

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
 Washed his light limbs as if embalming
 them;
 Another clipped her profuse locks, and
 threw
 The wreath upon him, like an anadem,²
 Which frozen tears instead of pearls be-
 gem;

²Garland.

Another in her willful grief would break
 Her bow and wingéd reeds, as if to stem
 A greater loss with one which was more
 weak;
 And dull the barbéd fire against his frozen
 cheek.

12

Another Splendor on his mouth alit,
 That mouth, whence it was wont to draw
 the breath
 Which gave it strength to pierce the
 guarded wit,
 And pass into the panting heart beneath
 With lightning and with music: the damp
 death
 Quenched its caress upon his icy lips;
 And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
 Of moonlight vapor, which the cold night
 clips,¹
 It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed
 to its eclipse.

13

And others came . . . Desires and
 Adorations,
 • Wingéd Persuasions and veiled Destinies,
 Splendors, and Glooms, and glimmering
 Incarnations
 Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phanta-
 sies;
 And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
 And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the
 gleam
 Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,
 Came in slow pomp;—the moving pomp
 might seem
 Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal
 stream.

14

All he had loved, and molded into thought,
 From shape, and hue, and odor, and sweet
 sound,
 Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
 Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair un-
 bound,
 Wet with the tears which should adorn
 the ground,
 Dimmed the aërial eyes that kindle day;
 Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,
 Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
 And the wild Winds flew round, sobbing in
 their dismay.

¹Embraces.

15

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless moun-
 tains,
 And feeds her grief with his remembered
 lay,
 And will no more reply to winds or foun-
 tains,
 Or amorous birds perched on the young
 green spray,
 Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day;
 Since she can mimic not his lips, more
 dear
 Than those for whose disdain she pined
 away²
 Into a shadow of all sounds:—a drear
 Murmur, between their songs, is all the
 woodmen hear.

16

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she
 threw down
 Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
 Or they dead leaves; since her delight is
 flown,
 For whom should she have waked the sul-
 len year?
 To Phœbus was not Hyacinth³ so dear
 Nor to himself Narcissus,⁴ as to both
 Thou, Adonais: wan they stand and sere
 Amid the faint companions of their youth,
 With dew all turned to tears; odor, to sighing
 ruth.

17

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale
 Mourns not her mate with such melodious
 pain;
 Not so the eagle, who like thee could
 scale
 Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's
 domain
 Her mighty youth with morning, doth com-
 plain,
 Soaring and screaming round her empty
 nest,
 As Albion wails for thee: the curse of Cain

²Than those of Narcissus, because of whose disdain she pined away, *etc.*³A youth loved by Apollo, who changed him, when he died, into a flower.⁴After disdaining Echo and other nymphs, Narcissus was punished by falling in love with his own reflected image. At his death he was changed into a flower.

Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,¹
And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!

18

Ah, woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving year;
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone;
The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear;
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Season's bier;
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
And build their mossy homes in field and brake;²
And the green lizard, and the golden snake,
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

19

Through wood and stream and field and hill and Ocean
A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst
As it has ever done, with change and motion,
From the great morning of the world when first
God dawned on Chaos; in its stream immersed,
The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light;
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst;
Diffuse themselves; and spend in love's delight,
The beauty and the joy of their renewed might.

20

The leprous corpse, touched by this spirit tender,
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
Like incarnations of the stars, when splendor
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death

¹J. W. Croker, the author of the anonymous paper on *Endymion* in the *Quarterly Review* which Shelley and other contemporaries believed to have been the proximate cause of Keats's death.

²Brier.

And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath;
Nought we know, dies. Shall that alone which knows

Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
By sightless³ lightning?—the intense atom glows
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose.

21

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
But for our grief, as if it had not been,
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!
Whence are we, and why are we? of what scene
The actors or spectators? Great and mean
Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.
As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,
Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,
Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to sorrow.

22

He will awake no more, oh, never more!
"Wake thou," cried Misery, "childless Mother, rise
Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core,
A wound more fierce than his, with tears and sighs."
And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,
And all the Echoes whom their sister's song
Had held in holy silence, cried: "Arise!"
Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,
From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendor sprang.

23

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs
Out of the East, and follows wild and drear
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,

³Invisible.

Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and
fear
So struck, so roused, so rapped Urania;
So saddened round her like an atmosphere
Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way
Even to the mournful place where Adonaiš
lay.

24

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
Through camps and cities rough with
stone, and steel,
And human hearts, which to her airy tread
Yielding not, wounded the invisible
Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell:
And barbéd tongues, and thoughts more
sharp than they,
Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
Whose sacred blood, like the young tears
of May,
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving
way.

25

• In the death-chamber for a moment
Death,
Shamed by the presence of that living
Might,
Blushed to annihilation, and the breath
Revisited those lips, and Life's pale light
Flashed through those limbs, so late her
dear delight.
“Leave me not wild and drear and com-
fortless,
As silent lightning leaves the starless
night!
Leave me not!” cried Urania: her distress
Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and
met her vain caress.

26

“Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
And in my heartless breast and burning
brain
That word, that kiss, shall all thoughts else
survive,
With food of saddest memory kept alive,
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
Of thee, my Adonaiš! I would give
All that I am to be as thou now art!
But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence
depart!

27

“O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of
men
Too soon, and with weak hands though
mighty heart
Dare the unpastured dragon¹ in his den?
Defenseless as thou wert, oh, where was
then
Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the
spear?
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
Thy spirit should have filled its crescent
sphere,
The monsters of life's waste had fled from
thee like deer.

28

“The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the
dead;
The vultures to the conqueror's banner
true
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,
And whose wings rain contagion;—how
they fled,
When, like Apollo, from his golden bow
The Pythian of the age² one arrow sped
And smiled!—The spoilers tempt no
second blow,
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn
them lying low.

29

“The sun comes forth, and many reptiles
spawn;
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gathered into death without a dawn,
And the immortal stars awake again;
So is it in the world of living men:
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight
Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and
when
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or
shared its light
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful
night.”

¹The world of men.

²Apollo was called the Pythian because he slew the Python. Shelley here applies the epithet to Byron, who attacked the reviewers in his satirical poem *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.

30

Thus ceased she: and the mountain shepherds came,
 Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent;
 The Pilgrim of Eternity,¹ whose fame
 Over his living head like Heaven is bent,
 An early but enduring monument,
 Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
 In sorrow; from her wilds Ierne sent
 The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,²
 And Love taught Grief to fall like music from
 his tongue.

31

Midst others of less note, came one frail
 Form,³
 A phantom among men; companionless
 As the last cloud of an expiring storm
 Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
 Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
 Actæon-like,⁴ and now he fled astray
 With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
 And his own thoughts, along that rugged
 way,
 Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and
 their prey.

32

A pardlike⁵ Spirit beautiful and swift—
 A Love in desolation masked;—a Power
 Girt round with weakness;—it can scarce
 uplift
 The weight of the superincumbent hour;
 It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
 A breaking billow;—even whilst we speak
 Is it not broken? On the withering flower
 The killing sun smiles brightly: on a cheek
 The life can burn in blood, even while the
 heart may break.

33

His head was bound with pansies over-
 blown,
 And faded violets, white, and pied, and
 blue;

¹Byron, so called because of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Cf. III, 70, 8 of *Childe Harold*.

²*I. e.*, Ireland sent Thomas Moore.

³Shelley.

⁴Actæon was torn to pieces by his own hounds after he had seen Artemis bathing.

⁵Leopard-like.

And a light spear topped with a cypress
 cone,
 Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses
 grew
 Yet dripping with the forest's noonday
 dew,
 Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
 Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of
 that crew
 He came the last, neglected and apart;
 A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hun-
 ter's dart.

34

All stood aloof, and at his partial⁶ moan
 Smiled through their tears; well knew that
 gentle band
 Who in another's fate now wept his own,
 As in the accents of an unknown land
 He sung new sorrow; sad Urania scanned
 The Stranger's mien, and murmured:
 "Who art thou?"
 He answered not, but with a sudden hand
 Made bare his branded and ensanguined
 brow,
 Which was like Cain's or Christ's—oh! that
 it should be so!

35

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?
 Athwart what brow is that dark mantle
 thrown?
 What form leans sadly o'er the white
 death-bed,
 In mockery of monumental stone,
 The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
 If it be He,⁷ who, gentlest of the wise,
 Taught, soothed, loved, honored the de-
 parted one,
 Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs,
 The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

36

Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh!
 What deaf and viperous murderer could
 crown
 Life's early cup with such a draught of
 woe?
 The nameless worm⁸ would now itself dis-
 own:

⁶Fond.

⁷Leigh Hunt.

⁸The *Quarterly* reviewer; see note to stanza 17 above.

It felt, yet could escape, the magic tone
 Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and
 wrong,
 But what was howling in one breast alone,
 Silent with expectation of the song,
 Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver
 lyre unstrung.

37

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame!
 Live! fear no heavier chastisement from
 me,
 Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!
 But be thyself, and know thyself to be!
 And ever at thy season be thou free
 To spill the venom when thy fangs o'er-
 flow:
 Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to
 thee;
 Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret
 brow,
 And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt
 —as now.

38

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
 Far from these carrion kites that scream
 below;
 He wakes or sleeps with the enduring
 dead;
 Thou canst not soar where he is sitting
 now.—
 Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall
 flow
 Back to the burning fountain whence it
 came,
 A portion of the Eternal, which must
 glow
 Through time and change, unquenchably
 the same,
 Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid
 hearth of shame.

39

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not
 sleep—
 He hath awakened from the dream of
 life—
 'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep
 With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
 And in mad trance, strike with our spirit's
 knife
 Invulnerable nothings.—*We* decay
 Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief

Convulse us and consume us day by day,
 And cold hopes swarm like worms within our
 living clay.

40

He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
 Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
 And that unrest which men miscall de-
 light,
 Can touch him not and torture not again;
 From the contagion of the world's slow
 stain
 He is secure, and now can never mourn
 A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in
 vain;
 Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to
 burn,
 With sparkless ashes load an unlamented
 urn.

41

He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not
 he;
 Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young
 Dawn,
 Turn all thy dew to splendor, for from thee
 The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
 Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
 Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and
 thou Air,
 Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst
 thrown
 O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it
 bare
 Even to the joyous stars which smile on its
 despair!

42

He is made one with Nature: there is
 heard
 His voice in all her music, from the moan
 Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet
 bird;
 He is a presence to be felt and known
 In darkness and in light, from herb and
 stone,
 Spreading itself where'er that Power may
 move
 Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
 Which wields the world with never-
 wearied love,
 Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it
 above.

43

He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely: he doth
bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there,
All new successions to the forms they wear;
Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks
its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the
Heaven's light.

44

The splendors of the firmament of time
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;
Like stars to their appointed height they
climb,
And death is a low mist which cannot blot
The brightness it may veil. When lofty
thought
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
And love and life contend in it, for what
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live
there
And move like winds of light on dark and
stormy air.

45

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal
thought,
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton¹
Rose pale,—his solemn agony had not
Yet faded from him; Sidney,² as he fought
And as he fell and as he lived and loved
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
Arose; and Lucan,³ by his death approved:
Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing re-
proved.

46

And many more, whose names on Earth
are dark,
But whose transmitted effluence cannot die
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,

¹Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770), who died by his own hand.

²Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586), who died from a wound received in battle.

³Roman poet (A. D. 39-65), who committed suicide to escape execution commanded by Nero.

Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
"Thou art become as one of us," they cry,
"It was for thee yon kingless sphere has
long
Swung blind in unascended majesty,
Silent alone amid an Heaven of Song.
Assume thy winged throne, thou Vesper of
our throng!"

47

Who mourns for Adonais? Oh, come
forth,
Fond wretch! and know thyself and him
aright.
Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous
Earth;
As from a center, dart thy spirit's light
Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
Sate the void circumference: then shrink
Even to a point within our day and night;
And keep thy heart light lest it make thee
sink
When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee
to the brink.

48

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulcher,
Oh, not of him, but of our joy: 'tis nought
That ages, empires, and religions there
Lie buried in the ravage they have
wrought;
For such as he can lend,—they borrow not
Glory from those who made the world
their prey;
And he is gathered to the kings of thought
Who waged contention with their time's
decay,
And of the past are all that cannot pass
away.

49

Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise,
The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
And where its wrecks like shattered moun-
tains rise,
And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses
dress
The bones of Desolation's nakedness
Pass, till the spirit of the spot shall lead
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access
Where, like an infant's smile, over the
dead
A light of laughing flowers along the grass
is spread;

50

And gray walls molder round, on which
 dull Time
 Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
 And one keen pyramid with wedge sub-
 lime,
 Pavilioning the dust of him who planned
 This refuge for his memory, doth stand
 Like flame transformed to marble; and be-
 neath,
 A field is spread, on which a newer band
 Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp
 of death,
 Welcoming him we lose with scarce extin-
 guished breath.

51

Here pause: these graves are all too young
 as yet
 To have outgrown the sorrow which con-
 signed
 Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,
 Here, on one fountain of a mourning
 mind,
 Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou
 find
 Thine own well full, if thou returnest
 home,
 Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter
 wind
 Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
 What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

52

The One remains, the many change and
 pass;
 Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's
 shadows fly;
 Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
 Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
 Until Death tramples it to fragments.—
 Die,
 If thou wouldst be with that which thou
 dost seek!
 Follow where all is fled!—Rome's azure
 sky,
 Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are
 weak
 The glory they transfuse with fitting truth
 to speak.

53

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink,
 my Heart?
 Thy hopes are gone before: from all
 things here
 They have departed; thou shouldst now
 depart!
 A light is passed from the revolving year,
 And man, and woman; and what still is dear
 Attracts to crush, repels to make thee
 wither.
 The soft sky smiles,—the low wind whis-
 pers near:
 'Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,
 No more let Life divide what Death can join
 together.

54

That Light whose smile kindles the
 Universe,
 That Beauty in which all things work and
 move,
 That Benediction which the eclipsing
 Curse
 Of birth can quench not, that sustaining
 Love
 Which through the web of being blindly
 wove
 By man and beast and earth and air and
 sea,
 Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
 The fire for which all thirst; now beams on
 me,
 Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

55

The breath whose might I have invoked in
 song
 Descends on me; my spirit's bark is
 driven,
 Far from the shore, far from the trembling
 throng
 Whose sails were never to the tempest
 given;
 The massy earth and spheréd skies are
 riven!
 I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
 Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of
 Heaven,
 The soul of Adonais, like a star,
 Beacons from the abode where the Eternal
 are.

HELLAS¹

THE FINAL CHORUS

THE world's great age begins anew,
 The golden years return,
 The earth doth like a snake renew
 Her winter weeds outworn:
 Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam,
 Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
 From waves serener far;
 A new Peneus² rolls his fountains
 Against the morning star.
 Where fairer Tempes³ bloom, there sleep
 Young Cyclads⁴ on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo⁵ cleaves the main,
 Fraught with a later prize;
 Another Orpheus sings again,
 And loves, and weeps, and dies.
 A new Ulysses leaves once more
 Calypso⁶ for his native shore.

Oh, write no more the tale of Troy,
 If earth Death's scroll must be!
 Nor mix with Laian⁷ rage the joy
 Which dawns upon the free:
 Although a subtler Sphinx renew
 Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise,
 And to remoter time
 Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
 The splendor of its prime;
 And leave, if nought so bright may live,
 All earth can take or Heaven can give.

¹A lyrical drama, written in the autumn of 1821 and published in the spring of 1822; inspired by the Greek war for independence, which Shelley thinks of as ushering in a new Golden Age which will surpass the ancient glories of Greece.

²A river of Thessaly.

³The valley through which the Peneus flows.

⁴The Cyclades, islands in the Ægean Sea.

⁵The ship of Jason, in which the Golden Fleece was carried.

⁶The nymph who vainly sought to keep Ulysses on her island with her, though she promised him immortality if he would remain.

⁷The family of Laius, king of Thebes, was pursued by dreadful misfortunes. The son of Laius was Ædipus, who freed Thebes from the affliction of the Sphinx by answering her riddle correctly, but who unwittingly killed his father and married his mother.

Saturn and Love their long repose
 Shall burst,⁸ more bright and good
 Than all who fell, than One who rose,
 Than many unsubdued:
 Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,
 But votive tears and symbol flowers.

Oh, cease! must hate and death return?
 Cease! must men kill and die?
 Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn
 Of bitter prophecy.
 The world is weary of the past,
 Oh, might it die or rest at last!

LINES: "WHEN THE
LAMP IS SHATTERED"⁹

I

WHEN the lamp is shattered
 The light in the dust lies dead—
 When the cloud is scattered
 The rainbow's glory is shed.
 When the lute is broken,
 Sweet tones are remembered not;
 When the lips have spoken,
 Loved accents are soon forgot.

II

As music and splendor
 Survive not the lamp and the lute,
 The heart's echoes render
 No song when the spirit is mute:—

⁸Saturn and Love were among the deities of a real or imaginary state of innocence and happiness. *All those who fell*, or the Gods of Greece, Asia, and Egypt; the *One who rose*, or Jesus Christ, at whose appearance the idols of the Pagan World were amerced of their worship; and *the many unsubdued*, or the monstrous objects of the idolatry of China, India, the Antarctic islands, and the native tribes of America, certainly have reigned over the understandings of men in conjunction or in succession, during periods in which all we know of evil has been in a state of portentous, and, until the revival of learning, perpetually increasing, activity. The Grecian gods seem indeed to have been personally more innocent, although it cannot be said, that as far as temperance and chastity are concerned, they gave so edifying an example as their successor. The sublime human character of Jesus Christ was deformed by an imputed identification with a Power, who tempted, betrayed, and punished the innocent beings who were called into existence by His sole will; and for the period of a thousand years, the spirit of this most just, wise, and benevolent of men has been propitiated with myriads of hecatombs of those who approached the nearest to His innocence and wisdom, sacrificed under every aggravation of atrocity and variety of torture. The horrors of the Mexican, the Peruvian, and the Indian superstitions are well known (Shelley's note).

⁹Written in 1822, published in 1824.

No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruined cell,
Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

III

When hearts have once mingled
Love first leaves the well-built nest;
The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possessed.
O Love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

IV

Its passions will rock thee
As the storms rock the ravens on high;
Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home
Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

TO JANE: THE
INVITATION¹

Best and brightest, come away!
Fairer far than this fair Day,
Which, like thee to those in sorrow,
Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow
To the rough Year just awake
In its cradle on the brake.
The brightest hour of unborn Spring,
Through the winter wandering,
Found, it seems, the halcyon Morn
To hoar February born.
Bending from Heaven, in azure mirth,
It kissed the forehead of the Earth,
And smiled upon the silent sea,
And bade the frozen streams be free,
And waked to music all their fountains,
And breathed upon the frozen mountains,
And like a prophetess of May
Strewed flowers upon the barren way,
Making the wintry world appear
Like one on whom thou smilest, dear.

¹Written in 1822, published as part of another poem in 1824, and in its present form in 1839. While in Italy Shelley saw much of Jane Williams, to whom he addressed several poems.

Away, away, from men and towns,
To the wild wood and the downs—
To the silent wilderness
Where the soul need not repress
Its music, lest it should not find
An echo in another's mind,
While the touch of Nature's art
Harmonizes heart to heart.
I leave this notice on my door
For each accustomed visitor:—
"I am gone into the fields
To take what this sweet hour yields;—
Reflection, you may come to-morrow,
Sit by the fireside with Sorrow.—
You with the unpaid bill, Despair,—
You, tiresome verse-reciter, Care,—
I will pay you in the grave,—
Death will listen to your stave.
Expectation too, be off!
To-day is for itself enough;
Hope, in pity mock not Woe
With smiles, nor follow where I go;
Long having lived on thy sweet food,
At length I find one moment's good
After long pain—with all your love,
This you never told me of."

Radiant Sister of the Day,
Awake! arise! and come away!
To the wild woods and the plains,
To the pools where winter rains
Image all their roof of leaves,
Where the pine its garland weaves
Of sapless green and ivy dun
Round stems that never kiss the sun;
Where the lawns and pastures be,
And the sandhills of the sea;—
Where the melting hoar-frost wets
The daisy-star that never sets,
And wind-flowers, and violets,
Which yet join not scent to hue,
Crown the pale year weak and new;
When the night is left behind
In the deep east, dun and blind,
And the blue noon is over us,
And the multitudinous
Billows murmur at our feet,
Where the earth and ocean meet,
And all things seem only one
In the universal sun.

WITH A GUITAR, TO JANE¹

ARIEL to Miranda:—Take
This slave of Music, for the sake
Of him who is the slave of thee,
And teach it all the harmony
In which thou canst, and only thou,
Make the delighted spirit glow,
Till joy denies itself again,
And, too intense, is turned to pain;
For by permission and command
Of thine own Prince Ferdinand,²
Poor Ariel sends this silent token
Of more than ever can be spoken;
Your guardian spirit, Ariel, who,
From life to life, must still pursue
Your happiness;—for thus alone
Can Ariel ever find his own.
From Prospero's enchanted cell,
As the mighty verses tell,
To the throne of Naples, he
Lit you o'er the trackless sea,
Flitting on, your prow before,
Like a living meteor.
When you die, the silent Moon,
In her interlunar swoon,
Is not sadder in her cell
Than deserted Ariel.
When you live again on earth,
Like an unseen star of birth,
Ariel guides you o'er the sea
Of life from your nativity.
Many changes have been run
Since Ferdinand and you begun
Your course of love, and Ariel still
Has tracked your steps, and served your will;
Now, in humbler, happier lot,
This is all remembered not;
And now, alas! the poor sprite is
Imprisoned, for some fault of his,
In a body like a grave;—
From you he only dares to crave,
For his service and his sorrow,
A smile to-day, a song to-morrow.

The artist who this idol wrought,
To echo all harmonious thought,
Felled a tree, while on the steep
The woods were in their winter sleep,
Rocked in that repose divine
On the wind-sweet Apennine;

And dreaming, some of Autumn past,
And some of Spring approaching fast,
And some of April buds and showers,
And some of songs in July bowers,
And all of love; and so this tree,—
O that such our death may be!—
Died in sleep, and felt no pain,
To live in happier form again:
From which, beneath Heaven's fairest star,
The artist wrought this loved Guitar,
And taught it justly to reply,
To all who question skillfully,
In language gentle as thine own;
Whispering in enamored tone
Sweet oracles of woods and dells,
And summer winds in sylvan cells;
For it had learned all harmonies
Of the plains and of the skies,
Of the forests and the mountains,
And the many-voiced fountains;
The clearest echoes of the hills,
The softest notes of falling rills,
The melodies of birds and bees,
The murmuring of summer seas,
And pattering rain, and breathing dew,
And airs of evening; and it knew
That seldom-heard mysterious sound,
Which, driven on its diurnal round,
As it floats through boundless day,
Our world enkindles in its way.—
All this it knows, but will not tell
To those who cannot question well
The Spirit that inhabits it;
It talks according to the wit
Of its companions; and no more
Is heard than has been felt before,
By those who tempt it to betray
These secrets of an elder day:
But, sweetly as its answers will
Flatter hands of perfect skill,
It keeps its highest, holiest tone
For our beloved Jane alone.

A DIRGE³

ROUGH wind, that moanest loud
Grief too sad for song;
Wild wind, when sullen cloud
Knells all the night long;
Sad storm, whose tears are vain,
Bare woods, whose branches strain,
Deep caves and dreary main,—
Wail, for the world's wrong!

¹Written in 1822, published in the *Athenaeum* in 1832.

²Jane Williams's husband, Edward Williams.

³Written in 1822, published in 1824.

JOHN KEATS (1795-1821)

Keats's father was stable-keeper at the Swan and Hoop Inn, Finsbury Pavement, London. He had married the daughter of the proprietor, and Keats was born there on 29 or 31 October, 1795. In 1803 Keats was sent to a good private school kept by the Rev. J. Clarke at Enfield. Here he attracted the attention of the junior master, Charles Cowden Clarke, and a relationship sprang up which extended beyond his period at the school and was of great use to him. Clarke later said that Keats, although during his last years at school an eager reader of history, fiction, and books of mythology, was also a sturdy, active youngster and a favorite among his school-fellows. In 1804 Keats's father was killed by a fall from his horse, and in 1810 his mother—who in 1805 had married a second time and in the following year had separated from her husband—died of a consumption. Keats's guardians at once removed him from school and apprenticed him to a surgeon. His passion for reading did not leave him in his new work and surroundings, and he kept in touch with the Clarks. It was in 1812 or 1813 that Cowden Clarke introduced him to the works of Spenser, reading to him Spenser's *Epithalamion* and lending him the *Faerie Queene*. A couple of years later it was also Clarke who introduced him to Chapman's *Homer*, which inspired the famous sonnet. Meanwhile Keats had in 1814 broken his apprenticeship and had gone to London to study medicine. Soon after this he began to write poetry, though continuing his medical studies. In 1816, through the instrumentality of Clarke, he met Leigh Hunt, a pleasant but superficial literary man and a champion of liberty. Hunt communicated his zeal for liberty to Keats and also encouraged the false taste evident in Keats's earlier poetry, but Hunt also by his interest did much to stimulate his genius and, too, introduced him to many of the literary men and artists of the time. Directly or indirectly through Hunt, Keats became acquainted with Benjamin Haydon—a mediocre artist but a man of fine taste who helped Keats to appreciate Greek sculpture—with J. H. Reynolds, Shelley, Horace Smith, Hazlitt, C. Wentworth Dilke, Wordsworth, and others.

In 1817 Keats published his first volume, *Poems*, a volume which on the whole showed much immaturity and which was harshly criticized. This, however, hardly discouraged him, for his own critical faculty was developing and he saw many of his faults as clearly as did his critics. In 1816 when he had come of age he had determined to abandon medicine for poetry, and there is no sign that he ever wavered concerning the rightness of this decision. In 1818 he published *Endymion*. He was dissatisfied with it, but felt that it was as good a poem as he could then write, and that it was better to put it out of his reach by publication than to attempt to mend it. In a preface he said as much;—any reader of the poem, he said, "must soon perceive great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished." But despite this admission the poem was greeted with extreme abuse by the critics—abuse so extreme that at the time it was reputed to have been a cause of Keats's early death. This, as we now know, it was not. Keats's reaction to criticism can only be described as fine and manly. As for hostile critics, he wrote to his publisher several months after the appearance of the poem, "I begin to get a little acquainted with my own strength and weakness. Praise or blame has but a momentary effect on the man whose love of beauty in the abstract makes him a severe critic on his own works. My own domestic criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what *Blackwood* or the *Quarterly* could possibly inflict—and also when I feel I am right, no external praise can give me such a glow as my own solitary re-perception and ratification of what is fine. J. S. [the writer of a letter about the poem to the *Morning Chronicle*] is perfectly right in regard to the slipshod *Endymion*. That it is so is no fault of mine. No!—though it may sound a little paradoxical. It is as good as I had power to make it—by myself. Had I been nervous about its being a perfect piece, and with that view asked advice, and trembled over every page, it would not have been written; for it is not in my nature to fumble—I will write independently.—I have written independently *without judgment*. I may write independently, and *with judgment*, hereafter. The Genius of Poetry must work out its own salvation in a man: It cannot be matured by law and precept, but by sensation and watchfulness in itself. That which is creative must create itself. In *Endymion* I leaped headlong into the sea, and thereby have become better acquainted with the soundings, the quicksands, and the rocks, than if I had stayed upon the green shore, and piped a silly pipe, and took tea and comfortable advice."

Already, indeed, before *Endymion* was published Keats was at work upon *Isabella* in the attempt to do something better. In the summer of 1818 he went with his friend Charles Brown on a walking tour through the Lake country to Scotland. After about six weeks of tramping he was compelled to return

to London on account of throat trouble which had developed. This was the first warning sign of the illness which was to cut his life short. In the fall of this year he first met Fanny Brawne, a girl with whom he fell deeply in love. He was also during the fall of this year in constant attendance at the bedside of his brother Tom, who died of consumption in December. Early in 1819 Keats was at work on *Hyperion* and *The Eve of St. Agnes*, and during the spring and fall he wrote the greater number of his finest poems. In February, 1820, it became unmistakable that he had consumption. During the spring he saw the 1820 volume of his poems through the press, but from that time forward he was, and felt himself to be, a doomed man. His condition continually grew worse, and at the end of the summer he was warned that it would be fatal to him to spend another winter in England. He sailed for Naples in September, stayed there until November, and then went to Rome. He was, however, too far gone in consumption for the Italian climate materially to help him, and he died in Rome on 23 February, 1821.

It has been remarked that, while Shelley wrote nearly all his greatest poetry in the period between his twenty-sixth year and the time of his death, Keats died at twenty-six, nor had he been a precocious youth. And yet, while Coleridge and Shelley were also pioneers in the nineteenth-century development of poetry, Professor H. J. C. Grierson has said that "Keats has been, without any exception, the greatest influence in English poetry for a whole century. To his example and inspiration are due all the wonderful sensuous felicity, the splendor of exotic phrasing and harmony of Tennyson's 1842 volumes; the bold and varied experiments of Browning's *Bells and Pomegranates*; the curious subtleties of *The Blessed Damozel* and *The House of Life*; *The Defense of Guinevere* and *The Earthly Paradise*; *Poems and Ballads* and *Atlantia in Calydon*. If poetry be first and last a sensuous pleasure, then Keats and his successors are the greatest of our poets since Spenser, and the Marlowe of *Hero and Leander*, the Shakespeare of *Venus and Adonis* and the 'sugared sonnets'; as virtuosi of phrase and harmonies perhaps greater even than these" (Warton Lect. XI, Brit. Acad.). Of course poetry is not first and last a sensuous pleasure, but it is a part of Keats's greatness that, although he began his work wishing only to mirror in poetry the fine flower of exquisite sensation, he rapidly outgrew his starting-point and was unmistakably approaching a rich maturity when death cut him down. He "is a great poet, first of all because he had the supreme sensitiveness of a poet's imagination, and caught up the beauty about him as a lake takes color and shadow from the sky, partly because he was a born artist and studied with constant devotion the technique of his art, but also because he had a mind and spirit bent on applying to his art the searching test of hard thought and vital experience. We only read Keats aright when we learn from his own lips that he wrote, not for art's sake only, but for the sake of truth and for the sake of life" (E. de Selincourt, Warton Lect. XII, Brit. Acad.).

SONNET¹

KEEN, fitful gusts are whisp'ring here and there

Among the bushes, half leafless and dry;

The stars look very cold about the sky,

And I have many miles on foot to fare;

Yet feel I little of the cold bleak air,

Or of the dead leaves rustling drearily,

Or of those silver lamps that burn on high,

Or of the distance from home's pleasant lair:

For I am brimful of the friendliness

That in a little cottage I have found;

Of fair-haired Milton's eloquent distress,

And all his love for gentle Lycid² drowned;

Of lovely Laura³ in her light green dress,

And faithful Petrarch gloriously crowned.

¹Written in 1816 after a visit to Leigh Hunt's cottage at Hampstead; published in 1817.

²*Lycidas*.

³The lady whose name Petrarch immortalized in the sonnets which record his love for her.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER⁴

MUCH have I traveled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.

Oft of one wide expansè had I been told,
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne:

Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman⁵ speak out loud and bold:

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies

When a new planet swims into his ken;

Or like stout Cortez⁶ when with eagle eyes

He stared at the Pacific—and all his men

Looked at each other with a wild surmise—

Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

⁴Written in 1815, published in 1817.

⁵George Chapman (1559?–1634) published his translations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* 1598–1616.

⁶Either a conscious alteration or a slip, as it was really Balboa who discovered the Pacific.

ENDYMION¹

BOOK I

HYMN TO PAN

O THOU, whose mighty palace roof doth hang
 From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth
 Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life,
 death
 Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness;
 Who lov'st to see the hamadryads² dress
 Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels
 darken;
 And through whole solemn hours dost sit,
 and hearken
 The dreary melody of bedded reeds—
 In desolate places, where dank moisture
 breeds
 The pipy hemlock³ to strange overgrowth,
 Bethinking thee, how melancholy loath
 Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx⁴—do thou now,
 By thy love's milky brow!
 By all the trembling mazes that she ran,
 •Hear us, great Pan!

O thou, for whose soul-soothing quiet,
 turtles⁵
 Passion their voices cooingly 'mong myrtles,
 What time thou wanderest at eventide
 Through sunny meadows, that outskirt the
 side
 Of thine enmossed realms: O thou, to whom
 Broad-leaved fig-trees even now foredoom
 Their ripened fruitage; yellow-girted bees
 Their golden honeycombs; our village leas
 Their fairest-blossomed beans and popped
 corn;
 The chuckling linnet its five young unborn,
 To sing for thee; low-creeping strawberries
 Their summer coolness; pent-up butterflies⁶
 Their freckled wings; yea, the fresh-budding
 year
 All its completions—be quickly near,

¹Published in 1818. The *Hymn to Pan* forms ll. 232–306 of Bk. I and was written in the early summer of 1817. It is sung by those at the festival of Latmian shepherds with which *Endymion* opens.

²Tree-nymphs.

³A poisonous European plant with a hollow stem, like a pipe.

⁴A nymph who fled from Pan and, when she sought refuge in a river, was changed into a reed.

⁵Turtle-doves.

⁶Chrysalises.

By every wind that nods the mountain pine,
 O forester divine!

Thou, to whom every faun and satyr flies
 For willing service; whether to surprise
 The squatted hare while in half-sleeping fit;
 Or upward ragged precipices flit
 To save poor lambkins from the eagle's maw;
 Or by mysterious enticement draw
 Bewildered shepherds to their path again;
 Or to tread breathless round the frothy
 main,⁷
 And gather up all fancifulest shells
 For thee to tumble into Naiads' cells,⁸
 And, being hidden, laugh at their out-peep-
 ing;
 Or to delight thee with fantastic leaping,
 The while they pelt each other on the crown
 With silvery oak-apples, and fir-cones
 brown—
 By all the echoes that about thee ring,
 Hear us, O satyr king!

O Harkener to the loud-clapping shears,
 While ever and anon to his shorn peers
 A ram goes bleating: Winder of the horn,
 When snouted wild-boars routing tender corn
 Anger our huntsmen: Breather round our
 farms,
 To keep off mildews, and all weather harms:
 Strange ministrant of undescribéd sounds,
 That come a-swooning over hollow grounds,
 And wither drearily on barren moors:
 Dread opener of the mysterious doors
 Leading to universal knowledge—see,
 Great son of Dryope,
 The many that are come to pay their vows
 With leaves about their brows!

Be still the unimaginable lodge
 For solitary thinkings; such as dodge
 Conception to the very bourne⁹ of heaven,
 Then leave the naked brain: be still the
 leaven
 That, spreading in this dull and clodded
 earth,
 Gives it a touch ethereal—a new birth:
 Be still a symbol of immensity;
 A firmament reflected in a sea;

⁷Sea.

⁸The dwelling-places of nymphs of fresh-water streams.

⁹Boundary.

An element filling the space between;
 An unknown—but no more: we humbly
 screen
 With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly bend-
 ing,
 And giving out a shout most heaven-rending,
 Conjure thee to receive our humble Pæan,¹
 Upon thy Mount Lycean!²

BOOK IV

SONG OF THE INDIAN MAID³

O Sorrow,
 Why dost borrow
 The natural hue of health, from vermeil⁴
 lips?—
 To give maiden blushes
 To the white rose bushes?
 Or is 't thy dewy hand the daisy tips?

O Sorrow,
 Why dost borrow
 The lustrous passion from a falcon-eye?—
 To give the glow-worm light?
 Or, on a moonless night,
 To tinge, on siren shores, the salt sea-spray?⁵

O Sorrow,
 Why dost borrow
 The mellow ditties from a mourning tongue?—
 To give at evening pale
 Unto the nightingale,
 That thou mayst listen the cold dews among?

O Sorrow,
 Why dost borrow
 Heart's lightness from the merriment of
 May?—
 A lover would not tread
 A cowslip on the head,
 Though he should dance from eve till peep of
 day—
 Nor any drooping flower
 Held sacred for thy bower,
 Wherever he may sport himself and play.

¹Hymn of praise.²Pan was born on Lycæus, a mountain in Arcadia.³This song, or hymn, forms ll. 146–290 of Bk. IV. It was written in the autumn of 1817. Endymion, while searching vainly for Cynthia, whom he loves, finds in the forest an Indian maiden who is bewailing the loss of her lover and the emptiness of her soul without love.⁴Vermilion.⁵Sea-spray.

To Sorrow
 I bade good morrow,
 And thought to leave her far away behind;
 But cheerly, cheerly,
 She loves me dearly;
 She is so constant to me, and so kind:
 I would deceive her
 And so leave her,
 But ah! she is so constant and so kind.

Beneath my palm-trees, by the river side,
 I sat a-weeping: in the whole world wide
 There was no-one to ask me why I wept—
 And so I kept
 Brimming the water-lily cups with tears
 Cold as my fears.

Beneath my palm-trees, by the river side,
 I sat a-weeping: what enamored bride,
 Cheated by shadowy wooer from the clouds,
 But hides and shrouds
 Beneath dark palm-trees by a river side?

And as I sat, over the light blue hills
 There came a noise of revelers: the rills
 Into the wide stream came of purple hue—
 'Twas Bacchus and his crew!⁶

The earnest trumpet spake, and silver thrills
 From kissing cymbals made a merry din—
 'Twas Bacchus and his kin!

Like to a moving vintage down they came,
 Crowned with green leaves, and faces all on
 flame;

All madly dancing through the pleasant
 valley,

To scare thee, Melancholy!
 O then, O then, thou wast a simple name!
 And I forgot thee, as the berried holly
 By shepherds is forgotten, when, in June,
 Tall chestnuts keep away the sun and
 moon:—

I rushed into the folly!

Within his car, aloft, young Bacchus stood,
 Trifling his ivy-dart,⁷ in dancing mood,
 With sidelong laughing;
 And little rills of crimson wine imbrued

⁶The following description of the progress of Bacchus is inspired by Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne*, a picture which is now in the National Gallery, London.⁷Playing with his thyrsus, or wand, which he always carried.

His plump white arms, and shoulders, enough
white

For Venus' pearly bite;
And near him rode Silenus¹ on his ass,
Pelted with flowers as he on did pass
Tipsily quaffing.

Whence came ye, merry Damsels! whence
came ye,

So many, and so many, and such glee?
Why have ye left your bowers desolate,
Your lutes, and gentler fate?

"We follow Bacchus! Bacchus on the wing,
A-conquering!

Bacchus, young Bacchus! good or ill betide,
We dance before him thorough kingdoms
wide:—

Come hither, lady fair, and joinéd be
To our wild minstrelsy!"

Whence came ye, jolly Satyrs! whence
came ye,

So many, and so many, and such glee?
Why have ye left your forest haunts, why
left

Your nuts in oak-tree cleft?—

"For wine, for wine we left our kernel tree;
For wine we left our heath, and yellow
brooms,

And cold mushrooms;
For wine we follow Bacchus through the
earth;

Great god of breathless cups and chirping
mirth!—

Come hither, lady fair, and joinéd be
To our mad minstrelsy!"

Over wide streams and mountains great we
went,

And, save when Bacchus kept his ivy tent,
Onward the tiger and the leopard pants,

With Asian elephants:

Onward these myriads—with song and dance,
With zebras striped, and sleek Arabians'
prance,

Web-footed alligators, crocodiles,
Bearing upon their scaly backs, in files,
Plump infant laughers mimicking the coil
Of seamen, and stout galley-rowers' toil:
With toying oars and silken sails they glide,
Nor care for wind and tide.

¹The foster-father of Bacchus.

Mounted on panthers' furs and lions'
manes,

From rear to van they scour about the plains;
A three days' journey in a moment done:
And always, at the rising of the sun,
About the wilds they hunt with spear and
horn,

On spleenful unicorn.

I saw Osirian² Egypt kneel adown
Before the vine-wreath crown!

I saw parched Abyssinia rouse and sing
To the silver cymbals' ring!

I saw the whelming vintage hotly pierce
Old Tartary the fierce!

The kings of Ind their jewel-scepters vail,³
And from their treasures scatter pearléd hail;
Great Brahma from his mystic heaven
groans,

And all his priesthood moans,
Before young Bacchus' eye-wink turning
pale.—

Into these regions came I, following him,
Sick-hearted, weary—so I took a whim
To stray away into these forests drear,

Alone, without a peer:
And I have told thee all thou mayest hear.

Young stranger!

I've been a ranger

In search of pleasure throughout every clime;

Alas, 'tis not for me!

Bewitched I sure must be,
To lose in grieving all my maiden prime.

Come then, Sorrow,

Sweetest Sorrow!

Like an own babe I nurse thee on my breast:

I thought to leave thee

And deceive thee,

But now of all the world I love thee best.

There is not one,

No, no, not one

But thee to comfort a poor lonely maid;

Thou art her mother,

And her brother,

Her playmate, and her wooer in the shade.

²According to Keats's authority (Lemprière) Osiris, a god worshiped by the Egyptians, corresponded to the Greek god Bacchus.

³Bend down.

SONNET¹

WHEN I have fears that I may cease to be
 Before my pen has gleaned my teeming
 brain,
 Before high-piléd books, in charact'ry,²
 Hold like rich garners the full-ripened
 grain;
 When I behold, upon the night's starred
 face,
 Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
 And think that I may never live to trace
 Their shadows, with the magic hand of
 chance;
 And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
 That I shall never look upon thee more,
 Never have relish in the faery power
 Of unreflecting love;—then on the shore
 Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
 Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

FRAGMENT OF AN ODE
 TO MAIA, WRITTEN
 ON MAY DAY, 1818³

MOTHER of Hermes! and still youthful Maia!
 May I sing to thee
 As thou wast hymned on the shores of
 Baia?⁴
 Or may I woo thee
 In earlier Sicilian? or thy smiles
 Seek as they once were sought, in Grecian
 isles,
 By bards who died content on pleasant
 sward,
 Leaving great verse unto a little clan?
 O, give me their old vigor, and unheard
 Save of the quiet primrose, and the span
 Of heaven and few ears,
 Rounded by thee, my song should die away
 Content as theirs,
 Rich in the simple worship of a day.

¹Written before 31 January, 1818; published in 1848.

²Writing.

³Published in 1848. Maia was the eldest and most beautiful of the seven sisters known as the Pleiads, and was a goddess of the spring.

⁴Baia, near Naples, was famous for its situation and baths, and many wealthy Romans had country houses there. Keats thinks of the cult of Maia as extending from Roman times back to the days when Greek colonies were planted in Sicily and further back to earlier days in the Greek islands.

STANZAS⁵

IN A drear-nighted December,
 Too happy, happy tree,
 Thy branches ne'er remember
 Their green felicity:
 The north cannot undo them,
 With a sleety whistle through them;
 Nor frozen thawings glue them
 From budding at the prime.

In a drear-nighted December,
 Too happy, happy brook,
 Thy bubblings ne'er remember
 Apollo's summer look;
 But with a sweet forgetting,
 They stay their crystal fretting,
 Never, never petting
 About the frozen time.

Ah! would 'twere so with many
 A gentle girl and boy!
 But were there ever any
 Writhed not at passéé joy?
 To know the change and feel it;
 When there is none to heal it
 Nor numbéd sense to steel it,
 Was never said in rhyme.

FANCY⁶

EVER let the Fancy roam,
 Pleasure never is at home:
 At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth;
 Then let wingéd Fancy wander
 Through the thought still spread beyond her:
 Open wide the mind's cage-door,
 She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar,
 O sweet Fancy! let her loose;
 Summer's joys are spoilt by use,
 And the enjoying of the Spring
 Fades as does its blossoming:
 Autumn's red-lipped fruitage too,
 Blushing through the mist and dew,
 Cloys with tasting: What do then?
 Sit thee by the ingle, when
 The sear faggot blazes bright,
 Spirit of a winter's night;
 When the soundless earth is muffled,
 And the cakéd snow is shuffled

⁵Written in 1817 or 1818, published in 1829.

⁶Written in 1818, published in 1820.

From the ploughboy's heavy shoon;
 When the Night doth meet the Noon
 In a dark conspiracy
 To banish Even from her sky.
 Sit thee there, and send abroad,
 With a mind self-overawed,
 Fancy, high-commissioned:—send her!
 She has vassals to attend her:
 She will bring, in spite of frost,
 Beauties that the earth hath lost;
 She will bring thee, all together,
 All delights of summer weather;
 All the buds and bells of May,
 From dewy sward or thorny spray;
 All the heapéd Autumn's wealth,
 With a still, mysterious stealth:
 She will mix these pleasures up
 Like three fit wines in a cup,
 And thou shalt quaff it:—thou shalt hear
 Distant harvest-carols clear;
 Rustle of the reaped corn;
 Sweet birds antheming the morn:
 And, in the same moment—hark!
 'Tis the early April lark,
 Or the rooks, with busy caw,
 Foraging for sticks and straw.
 Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
 The daisy and the marigold;
 White-plumed lilies, and the first
 Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst;
 Shaded hyacinth, alway
 Sapphire queen of the mid-May;
 And every leaf, and every flower
 Pearléd with the self-same shower.
 Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep
 Meager from its celléd sleep;
 And the snake all winter-thin
 Cast on sunny bank its skin!
 Freckled nest eggs thou shalt see
 Hatching in the hawthorn-tree,
 When the hen-bird's wing doth rest
 Quiet on her mossy nest;
 Then the hurry and alarm
 When the bee-hive casts its swarm;
 Acorns ripe down-pattering,
 While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy! let her loose;
 Everything is spoilt by use:
 Where's the cheek that doth not fade,
 Too much gazed at? Where's the maid
 Whose lip mature is ever new?
 Where's the eye, however blue,
 Doth not weary? Where's the face

One would meet in every place?
 Where's the voice, however soft,
 One would hear so very oft?
 At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
 Let, then, wingéd Fancy find
 Thee a mistress to thy mind:
 Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter,¹
 Ere the God of Torment taught her
 How to frown and how to chide;
 With a waist and with a side
 White as Hebe's,² when her zone
 Slipped its golden clasp, and down
 Fell her kirtle to her feet,
 While she held the goblet sweet,
 And Jove grew languid.—Break the mesh
 Of the Fancy's silken leash;
 Quickly break her prison-string,
 And such joys as these she'll bring.—
 Let the wingéd Fancy roam,
 Pleasure never is at home.

ODE³

BARDS of Passion and of Mirth,
 Ye have left your souls on earth!
 Have ye souls in heaven too,
 Double-lived in regions new?
 Yes, and those of heaven commune
 With the spheres of sun and moon;
 With the noise of fountains wondrous,
 And the parle⁴ of voices thund'rous;
 With the whisper of heaven's trees
 And one another, in soft ease
 Seated on Elysian lawns
 Browsed by none but Dian's fawns;
 Underneath large blue-bells tented,
 Where the daisies are rose-scented,
 And the rose herself has got
 Perfume which on earth is not;
 Where the nightingale doth sing
 Not a senseless, trancéd thing,
 But divine, melodious truth;
 Philosophic numbers smooth;

¹Proserpine, who became the queen of Pluto, king of the underworld of shades.

²Jove's cup-bearer.

³Written in 1818, published in 1820. Keats wrote this in his copy of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, on the blank page preceding the tragi-comedy entitled *The Fair Maid of the Inn*. The poem was, therefore, if not addressed to Beaumont and Fletcher, at least inspired by thought of their work.

⁴Speech.

Tales and golden histories
Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
On the earth ye live again;
And the souls ye left behind you
Teach us, here, the way to find you,
Where your other souls are joying
Never slumbered, never cloying.
Here, your earth-born souls still speak
To mortals, of their little week;
Of their sorrows and delights;
Of their passions and their spites;
Of their glory and their shame;
What doth strengthen and what maim.
Thus ye teach us, every day,
Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Ye have souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new!

LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN¹

Souls of poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?
Have ye tippled drink more fine
Than mine host's Canary wine?
Or are fruits of Paradise
Sweeter than those dainty pies
Of venison? O generous food!
Dressed as though bold Robin Hood
Would, with his maid Marian,
Sup and bowse² from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day
Mine host's sign-board flew away,
Nobody knew whither, till
An Astrologer's old quill
To a sheepskin gave the story,—
Said he saw you in your glory,
Underneath a new old-sign
Sipping beverage divine,
And pledging with contented smack
The Mermaid in the Zodiac.³

¹Written in 1818, published in 1820. The Mermaid Tavern, in Bread Street, Cheapside, was the favorite meeting-place of the chief men of letters of the day at the close of the sixteenth century and in the early seventeenth.

²Drink.

³*I.e.*, in the heavens.

Souls of poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

ROBIN HOOD⁴

TO A FRIEND

No! THOSE days are gone away,
And their hours are old and gray,
And their minutes buried all
Under the down-trodden pall
Of the leaves of many years:
Many times have Winter's shears,
Frozen North, and Chilling East,
Sounded tempests to the feast
Of the forest's whispering fleeces,⁵
Since men knew nor rent nor leases.

No, the bugle sounds no more,
And the twanging bow no more;
Silent is the ivory⁶ shrill
Past the heath and up the hill;
There is no mid-forest laugh,
Where lone Echo gives the half
To some wight, amazed to hear
Jesting, deep in forest dear.

On the fairest time of June
You may go, with sun or moon,
Or the seven stars to light you,
Or the polar ray to right you;⁷
But you never may behold
Little John, or Robin bold:
Never one, of all the clan,
Thrumming on an empty can
Some old hunting ditty, while
He doth his green way beguile
To fair hostess Merriment,
Down beside the pasture Trent;⁸
For he left the merry tale,
Messenger for spicy ale.

Gone, the merry morris⁹ din;
Gone, the song of Gamelyn;¹⁰

⁴Written early in 1818, published in 1820. The friend was John Hamilton Reynolds.

⁵Leaves. ⁶Whistle.

⁷Or with Charles's Wain (the Dipper), or the North Star.

⁸The fields about the River Trent, which runs by Sherwood Forest.

⁹An outdoor dance in costume generally danced by five men and a boy who impersonated Maid Marian.

¹⁰Name of the hero of a tale of outlawry formerly attributed to Chaucer.

Gone, the tough-belted outlaw
 Idling in the "grené shawe";¹
 All are gone away and past!
 And if Robin should be cast
 Sudden from his tufted grave,
 And if Marian should have
 Once again her forest days,
 She would weep, and he would craze;
 He would swear, for all his oaks,
 Fall'n beneath the dock-yard strokes,
 Have rotted on the briny seas;
 She would weep that her wild bees
 Sang not to her—strange! that honey
 Can't be got without hard money!

So it is; yet let us sing
 Honor to the old bow-string!
 Honor to the bugle-horn!
 Honor to the woods unshorn!
 Honor to the Lincoln green!²
 Honor to the archer keen!
 Honor to tight little John,
 And the horse he rode upon!
 Honor to bold Robin Hood,
 Sleeping in the underwood!
 Honor to Maid Marian,
 And to all the Sherwood clan!
 Though their days have hurried by
 Let us two a burden try.

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES³

ST. AGNES' EVE—ah, bitter chill it was!
 The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
 The hare limped trembling through the
 frozen grass,
 And silent was the flock in woolly fold;
 Numb were the Beadsman's fingers while
 he told
 His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
 Like pious incense from a censer old,

¹Green wood.

²Green cloth dyed at Lincoln.

³Written early in 1819, published in 1820. The Eve of St. Agnes is 20 January. Probably the subject was suggested to Keats by a passage in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (pt. III, sec. ii, mem. 3, subs. i): "'Tis their only desire, if it may be done by art, to see their husband's picture in a glass; they'll give anything to know when they shall be married, how many husbands they shall have, by *Crommyomantia*, a kind of divination with onions laid on the altar on Christmas Eve, or by fasting on St. Agnes' Eve or Night, to know who shall be their first husband."

Seemed taking flight for heaven without a
 death,
 Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his
 prayer he saith.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;
 Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his
 knees,
 And back returneth, meager, barefoot,
 wan,
 Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
 The sculptured dead, on each side, seem to
 freeze,
 Emprisoned in black, purgatorial rails:
 Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,⁴
 He passeth by, and his weak spirit fails
 To think how they may ache in icy hoods
 and mails.

Northward he turneth through a little door,
 And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden
 tongue
 Flattered to tears this agéd man and poor.
 But no—already had his death-bell rung;
 The joys of all his life were said and sung;
 His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve:
 Another way he went, and soon among
 Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
 And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake
 to grieve.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude
 soft;
 And so it chanced, for many a door was
 wide,
 From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
 The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
 The level chambers, ready with their pride,
 Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
 The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
 Stared, where upon their heads the cornice
 rests,
 With hair blown back, and wings put cross-
 wise on their breasts.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
 With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
 Numerous as shadows haunting fairily
 The brain, new-stuffed, in youth, with
 triumphs gay

⁴Oratories, small chapels for prayer. The adjective is transferred from the statues to the place.

Of old romance. These let us wish away,
 And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady
 there,
 Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry
 day,
 On love, and winged St. Agnes' saintly
 care,
 As she had heard old dames full many times
 declare.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
 Young virgins might have visions of del-
 light,
 And soft adorings from their loves receive
 Upon the honeyed middle of the night,
 If ceremonies due they did aright;
 As, supperless to bed they must retire,
 And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
 Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
 Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they
 desire.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Made-
 line:

The music, yearning like a God in pain,
 She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
 Fixed on the floor, saw many a sweeping
 train

Pass by—she heeded not at all: in vain
 Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
 And back retired; not cooled by high dis-
 dain,

But she saw not: her heart was elsewhere;
 She sighed for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest
 of the year.

She danced along with vague, regardless
 eyes,

Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and
 short:

The hallowed hour was near at hand: she
 sighs

Amid the timbrels, and the thronged re-
 sort

Of whisperers in anger or in sport;

'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and
 scorn,

Hoodwinked with fairy fancy; all amorn,¹
 Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,²

And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

¹Deadened.

²St. Agnes was always pictured with lambs. On the anniversary of her martyrdom two lambs are blessed, then shorn, and the wool is spun and woven by nuns.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
 She lingered still. Meantime, across the
 moors,

Had come young Porphyro, with heart on
 fire

For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
 Buttressed from moonlight, stands he, and
 implores

All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
 But for one moment in the tedious hours,
 That he might gaze and worship all un-
 seen;

Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth
 such things have been.

He ventures in: let no buzzed whisper tell;
 All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
 Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous cita-
 del:

For him, those chambers held barbarian
 hordes,

Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl
 Against his lineage; not one breast affords

Him any mercy in that mansion foul,
 Save one old beldame, weak in body and in
 soul.

Ah, happy chance! the agéd creature came,
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's
 flame,

Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland.
 He startled her; but soon she knew his
 face,

And grasped his fingers in her palsied hand,
 Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from
 this place;

They are all here to-night, the whole blood-
 thirsty race!

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish
 Hildebrand;

He had a fever late, and in the fit

He curséd thee and thine, both house and
 land:

Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a
 whit

More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me! flit!
 Flit like a ghost away."—"Ah, Gossip

dear,

We're safe enough; here in this arm-chair
 sit,

And tell me how"—"Good saints! not here, not here;
Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

"He followed through a lowly archéd way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume,
And as she muttered "Well-a—well-a-day!"

He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
"Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
"O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
Yet men will murder upon holy days:
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,¹
And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays
To venture so: it fills me with amaze
To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve!
God's help! my lady fair the conjurer plays
This very night: good angels her deceive!
But let me laugh awhile,—I've mickle² time to grieve."

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an agéd crone
Who keepeth closed a wondrous riddle-book,
As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
Made purple riot: then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:

"A cruel man and impious thou art:
Sweet lady! let her pray, and sleep, and dream

Alone with her good angels, far apart

¹Supposed to be a sign of supernatural power.

²Much.

From wicked men like thee. Go, go! I deem
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"

Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find grace

When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,

If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
Or look with ruffian passion in her face.

Good Angela, believe me, by these tears,
Or I will, even in a moment's space,
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,

And beard them, though they be more fanged than wolves and bears."

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,

Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;

Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,

Were never missed." Thus plaining, doth she bring

A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
So woeful, and of such deep sorrowing,

That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide

Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,

While legioned fairies paced the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.

Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.³

³According to one legend Merlin's father was a demon, so that his "debt" to the demon was his existence. He paid this when Vivien destroyed him by means of a spell which he himself had taught her.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:

"All cates¹ and dainties shall be stored there

Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour-frame²

Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,

For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare On such a catering trust my dizzy head.

Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer

The while. Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,

Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.

The lover's endless minutes slowly passed; The dame returned, and whispered in his ear

To follow her; with aged eyes aghast From fright of dim espial. Safe at last, Through many a dusky gallery, they gain The maiden's chamber, silken, hushed, and chaste;

Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.

His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

Her faltering hand upon the balustrade, Old Angela was feeling for the stair, When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid, Rose, like a missioned spirit, unaware:

With silver taper's light, and pious care, She turned, and down the aged gossip led To a safe level matting. Now prepare,

Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;

She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove frayed³ and fled.

Out went the taper as she hurried in;

Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:

She closed the door, she panted, all akin To spirits of the air, and visions wide:

No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!

But to her heart, her heart was voluble,

Paining with eloquence her balmy side;

As though a tongueless nightingale should swell

Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

A casement high and triple-arched there was,

All garlanded with carven imag'ries, Of fruits and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,

And diamonded with panes of quaint device,

Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes, As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings;

And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,

And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings, shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of queens and kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,

And threw warm gules⁴ on Madeline's fair breast,

As down she knelt for Heaven's grace and boon;

Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together pressed,

And on her silver cross soft amethyst,

And on her hair a glory, like a saint:

She seemed a splendid angel, newly dressed, Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro grew faint:

She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done, Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees;

Unclassps her warmed jewels one by one;

Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees

Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:

Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,

Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,

In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,

But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

¹Provisions.

²Double hoops for holding embroidery.

³Frightened.

⁴Blood-red (heraldic term).

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
 In sort of wakeful swoon, perplexed she
 lay,
 Until the popped warmth of sleep oppressed
 Her soothéd limbs, and soul fatigued away;
 Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-
 day;
 Blissfully havened both from joy and pain;
 Clapsed like a missal where swart Pay-
 nims pray;¹
 Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
 As though a rose should shut, and be a bud
 again.

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
 Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
 And listened to her breathing, if it chanced
 To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
 Which when he heard, that minute did he
 bless,
 And breathed himself: then from the
 closet crept,
 Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
 And over the hushed carpet, silent, step-
 ped,
 And 'tween the curtains peeped, where, lo!—
 how fast she slept!

Then by the bedside, where the faded
 moon
 Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
 A table, and, half anguished, threw thereon
 A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:—
 O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!²
 The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
 The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarinet,
 Affray his ears, though but in dying
 tone:—
 The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise
 is gone.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
 In blanchéd linen, smooth, and lavendered,
 While he from forth the closet brought a
 heap
 Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and
 gourd;

With jellies soother³ than the creamy curd,
 And lucent syrops, tinct⁴ with cinnamon;
 Manna and dates, in argosy⁵ transferred
 From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
 From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon.

These delicacies he heaped with glowing
 hand
 On golden dishes and in baskets bright
 Of wreathéd silver: sumptuous they stand
 In the retiréd quiet of the night,
 Filling the chilly room with perfume
 light.—

“And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
 Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:⁶
 Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
 Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul
 doth ache.”

Thus whispering, his warm, unnervéd arm
 Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
 By the dusk curtains:—'twas a midnight
 charm

Impossible to melt as icéd stream:
 The lustrous salvers in the moonlight
 gleam;
 Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
 It seemed he never, never could redeem
 From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;
 So mused awhile, entailed in wooféd phanta-
 sies.⁷

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
 Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tender-
 est be,
 He played an ancient ditty, long since
 mute,
 In Provence called “La belle dame sans
 mercy”:⁸

Close to her ear touching the melody;—
 Wherewith disturbed, she uttered a soft
 moan:

He ceased—she panted quick—and sud-
 denly

Her blue affrayéd eyes wide open shone:
 Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-
 sculptured stone.

¹Merchant-ship.

²Literally, hermit—*i.e.*, here, consecrated servant.

³Fancies mingled together as are woven threads.

⁴The Beautiful Lady without Mercy. The poem is not of Provençal origin, but is by Alain Chartier, court poet of Charles II of France. An English translation of it was attributed to Chaucer, and thus Keats happened to see the title.

¹As tightly closed as a Christian prayer-book in a pagan land. (Keats originally wrote, “Shut like a missal,” etc.)

²Charm. Morpheus was the god of sleep.

³Softer.

⁴Flavored.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
There was a painful change, that nigh
expelled

The blisses of her dream so pure and deep,
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many
a sigh,

While still her gaze on Porphyro would
keep;

Who knelt, with joinéd hands and piteous
eye,

Fearing to move or speak, she looked so
dreamingly.

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine
ear,

Made tunable with every sweetest vow;
And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear:
How changed thou art! how pallid, chill,
and drear!

Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
Those looks immortal, those complainings
dear!

Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou' diest, my Love, I know not where
to go."

Beyond a mortal man impassioned far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing star
Seen 'mid the sapphire heaven's deep re-
pose;

Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odor with the violet,—
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind
blows

Like Love's alarum, pattering the sharp
sleet

Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon
hath set.

"Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown
sleet:

"This is no dream, my bride, my Made-
line!"

"Tis dark: the icéd gusts still rave and beat:
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and
pine.

Cruel! what traitor could thee hither
bring?

I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,

Though thou forsakest a deceived thing;—
A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned
wing."

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely
bride!

Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and
vermeil-dyed?

Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
After so many hours of toil and quest,
A famished pilgrim,—saved by miracle.

Though I have found, I will not rob thy
nest,

Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st
well

To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

"Hark! 'tis an elfin storm from fairy land,
Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
Arise—arise! the morning is at hand;—
The bloated wassailers will never heed;—
Let us away, my love, with happy speed;
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
Drowned all in Rhenish and the sleepy
mead.

Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home
for thee."

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all around
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready
spears—

Down the wide stairs a darkling way they
found;

In all the house was heard no human
sound.

A chain-drooped lamp was flickering by
each door;

The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and
hound,

Fluttered in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide
hall;

Like phantoms to the iron porch they glide;
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side:
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook
his hide,

But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:

By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide:—

The chains lie silent on the footworn
stones;
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges
groans.

And they are gone: ay, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.
That night the Baron dreamed of many a
woe,
And all his warrior-guests with shade and
form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-
worm,
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitched, with meager face
deform;
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes
cold.

TO SLEEP¹

Oh sorrowful embalmer of the still midnight!
Shutting, with careful fingers and benign,
Our gloom-pleased eyes, embowered from the
light,
Enshaded in forgetfulness divine;
O soothest Sleep! if so it please thee, close,
In midst of this thine hymn, my willing
eyes,
Or wait the amen, ere thy poppy throws
Around my bed its lulling charities;
Then save me, or the passed day will shine
Upon my pillow, breeding many woes;
Save me from curious conscience, that still
lords
Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a
mole;
Turn the key deftly in the oiléd wards,
And seal the hushéd casket of my soul.

LA BELLE DAME SANS
MERCI²

O WHAT can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;³
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

I set her on my pacing steed
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
“I love thee true!”

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept and sighed full sore,
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
With kisses four.

And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dreamed—ah, woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dreamed
On the cold hill's side.

I saw pale kings, and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—“La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!”

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gapéd wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill's side.

³Girdle.

¹Written in 1819, published in 1848 (an early draft was published in America, in the *Dial*, in 1843).

²Written in the spring of 1819, published (by Leigh Hunt in the *Indicator*) in 1820. Two versions of the poem exist, the earlier of which is here printed. Keats owes the title—but nothing more than the title—to a poem by Alain Chartier.

And this is why I sojourn here,
 Alone and palely loitering,
 Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
 And no birds sing.

TWO SONNETS ON FAME¹

I

FAME, like a wayward girl, will still be coy
 To those who woo her with too slavish
 knees,
 But makes surrender to some thoughtless
 boy,

And dotes the more upon a heart at ease;
 She is a Gypsy will not speak to those
 Who have not learned to be content with-
 out her;

A Jilt, whose ear was never whispered close,
 Who thinks they scandal her who talk
 about her;

A very Gypsy is she, Nilus-born,²
 Sister-in-law to jealous Potiphar;
 Ye love-sick Bards! repay her scorn for scorn;
 Ye Artists lovelorn! madmen that ye are!
 Make your best bow to her and bid adieu,
 Then, if she likes it, she will follow you.

II

"You cannot eat your cake and have it too."—
Proverb.

How fevered is the man, who cannot look
 Upon his mortal days with temperate
 blood,

Who vexes all the leaves of his life's book,
 And robs his fair name of its maidenhood;

It is as if the rose should pluck herself,

Or the ripe plum finger its misty bloom,

As if a Naiad, like a meddling elf,

Should darken her pure grot with muddy
 gloom;

But the rose leaves herself upon the brier,
 For winds to kiss and grateful bees to
 feed,

And the ripe plum still wears its dim attire;
 The undisturbed lake has crystal space;

Why then should man, teasing the world
 for grace,

Spoil his salvation for a fierce miscreed?

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE³

MY HEART aches, and a drowsy numbness
 pains

My sense, as⁴ though of hemlock⁴ I had
 drunk,

Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
 One minute past, and Lethe-wards had
 sunk:

'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
 But being too happy in thine happiness,—
 That thou, light-wingéd Dryad⁵ of the
 trees,

In some melodious plot
 Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
 Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage! that hath been
 Cooled a long age in the deep-delv'd earth,
 Tasting of Flora⁶ and the country-green,
 Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt
 mirth!

O for a beaker full of the warm South,
 Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,⁷
 With beaded bubbles winking at the
 brim,

And purple-stainéd mouth;
 That I might drink, and leave the world
 unseen,

And with thee fade away into the forest
 dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
 What thou among the leaves hast never
 known,

The weariness, the fever, and the fret
 Here, where men sit and hear each other
 groan;

Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray
 hairs,

Where youth grows pale, and specter-thin,
 and dies;

Where but to think is to be full of sor-
 row

And leaden-eyed despairs;

Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous
 eyes,

Or new Love pine at them beyond to-
 morrow.

¹Both sonnets were written in 1819 and published in 1848.

²Gypsies were formerly supposed to come from Egypt.

³Written in May, 1819; published in 1820.

⁴A poison. ⁵Tree-nymph.

⁶Goddess of flowers.

⁷Spring of the Muses on Mount Helicon.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
 Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,¹
 But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
 Though the dull brain perplexes and re-
 tards:

Already with thee! tender is the night,
 And haply the Queen-Moon is on her
 throne,
 Clustered around by all her starry Fays;
 But here there is no light,
 Save what from heaven is with the breezes
 blown
 Through verdurous glooms and winding
 mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the
 boughs,
 But, in embalméd darkness, guess each sweet
 Wherewith the seasonable month endows
 The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree
 wild;
 White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglan-
 tine;
 Fast-fading violets covered up in leaves;
 And mid-May's eldest child,
 The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
 The murmurous haunt of flies on sum-
 mer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,
 Called him soft names in many a muséd
 rhyme,
 To take into the air my quiet breath,—
 Now more than ever seems it rich to
 die,
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul
 abroad
 In such an ecstasy!
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in
 vain—
 To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal
 Bird!
 No hungry generations tread thee down;
 The voice I hear this passing night was
 heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown:

Perhaps the self-same song that found a
 path
 Through the sad heart of Ruth,² when,
 sick for home,
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
 The same that oft-times hath
 Charmed magic casements, opening on the
 foam
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
 To toll me back from thee to my sole
 self.
 Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
 As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.
 Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
 Past the near meadows, over the still
 stream,
 Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried
 deep
 In the next valley-glades:
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
 Fled is that music:—do I wake or sleep?

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN³

THOU still unravished bride of quietness,
 Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
 Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our
 rhyme:
 What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy
 shape
 Of deities or mortals, or of both,
 In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?⁴
 What men or gods are these? What
 maidens loath?
 What mad pursuit? What struggle to es-
 cape?
 What pipes and timbrels? What wild
 ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
 Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play
 on;
 Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:

²See Ruth, ii.

³Written in February or March, 1819; published in 1820.

⁴Tempe is a valley in Thessaly, Arcadia a mountainous region in the Peloponnese.

¹Leopards.

Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave

Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,

Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;

She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,

For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,

For ever piping songs for ever new;

More happy love! more happy, happy love!

For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,

For ever panting and for ever young;

All breathing human passion far above,

That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,

A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?

To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,

And all her silken flanks with garlands dressed?

What little town by river or sea-shore,

Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,

Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?

And, little town, thy streets for evermore

Will silent be; and not a soul to tell

Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede¹

Of marble men and maidens overwrought,

With forest branches and the trodden weed;

Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought

As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!

When old age shall this generation waste,

Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe

Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

¹Embroidery.

ODE TO PSYCHE²

O GODDESS! hear these tuneless numbers,
wrung

By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,

And pardon that thy secrets should be sung
Even into thine own soft-conchéd ear:

Surely I dreamed to-day, or did I see

The wingéd Psyche with awakened eyes?

I wandered in a forest thoughtlessly,

And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
Saw two fair creatures, couchéd side by side

In deepest grass, beneath the whispering roof

Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where
there ran

A brooklet, scarce espied:

'Mid hushed, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyed,

Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,
They lay calm-breathing, on the bedded grass;

Their armsembraçéd, and their pinions too;

Their lips touched not, but had not bade adieu,

As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber,
And ready still past kisses to outnumber

At tender eye-dawn of aureorean love:

The wingéd boy I knew;³

But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove?

His Psyche true!

O latest-born and loveliest vision far

Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy!

Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-regioned star,⁴

Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky;⁵

Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,

Nor altar heaped with flowers;

Nor Virgin-choir to make delicious moan

Upon the midnight hours;

²Written in the spring of 1819, published in 1820. Keats wrote in a letter, "You must recollect that Psyche was not embodied as a goddess before the time of Apuleius the Platonist, who lived after the Augustan age, and consequently the goddess was never worshiped or sacrificed to with any of the ancient fervor, and perhaps never thought of in the old religion—I am more orthodox than to let a heathen goddess be so neglected."

³Cupid. The story of Cupid and Psyche may be read in Walter Pater's translation (in *Marius the Epicurean*) or in Robert Bridges' poem, *Eros and Psyche*.

⁴The moon. Phœbe is Artemis.

⁵The Evening Star, Venus.

No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
 From chain-swung censer teeming;
 No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
 Of pale-mouthed prophet dreaming.

O brightest! though too late for antique
 vows,

Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,
 When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
 Holy the air, the water, and the fire;
 Yet even in these days so far retired
 From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,¹
 Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
 I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspired.
 So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
 Upon the midnight hours;
 Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense
 sweet
 From swingéd censer teeming;
 Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat
 Of pale-mouthed prophet dreaming.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
 In some untrodden region of my mind,
 Where branched thoughts, new-grown with
 pleasant pain,
 Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind:
 Far, far around shall those dark-clustered
 trees
 Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by
 steep;
 And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds,
 and bees,
 The moss-lain Dryads shall be lulled to
 sleep;
 And in the midst of this wide quietness
 A rosy sanctuary will I dress
 With the wreathed trellis of a working brain,
 With buds, and bells, and stars without a
 name,
 With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
 Who breeding flowers, will never breed the
 same:
 And there shall be for thee all soft delight
 That shadowy thought can win,
 A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
 To let the warm Love in!

TO AUTUMN²

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
 Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;

Conspiring with him how to load and bless
 With fruit the vines that round the thatch-
 eaves run;
 To bend with apples the mossed cottage-
 trees,
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
 To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel
 shells
 With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
 And still more, later flowers for the bees,
 Until they think warm days will never cease,
 For Summer has o'er-brimmed their
 clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
 Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
 Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing
 wind;
 Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
 Drowsed with the fumes of poppies, while
 thy hook
 Spares the next swath and all its twined
 flowers;
 And sometime like a gleaner thou dost keep
 Steady thy laden head across a brook;
 Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
 Thou watchest the last oozeings, hours
 by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where
 are they?
 Think not of them, thou hast thy music
 too,
 While barréd clouds bloom the soft dying
 day,
 And touch the stubble-plains with rosy
 hue;
 Then in a wailful choir, the small gnats
 mourn
 Among the river shallows,³ borne aloft
 Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
 And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly
 bourn;
 Hedge-cricket⁴ sing; and now with treble
 soft
 The redbreast whistles from a garden-
 croft;⁵
 And gathering swallows twitter in the
 skies.

³Willows.

⁴Grasshoppers.

⁵Garden-enclosure.

¹Translucent wings.

²Written in September, 1819, published in 1820.

ODE ON MELANCHOLY¹

No, no, go not to Lethe,² neither twist
Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poison-
ous wine;

Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kissed
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;³
Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
Your mournful Psyche,⁴ nor the downy
owl

A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
And drown the wakeful anguish of the
soul.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
And hides the green hill in an April shroud;
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
Or on the wealth of globéd peonies;
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless
eyes.

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must
die;

And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:
Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veiled Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose
strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate
fine:

His soul shall cast the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

LAMIA⁵

PART I

UPON a time, before the faery broods
Drove Nymph and Satyr from the prosper-
ous woods,
Before King Oberon's bright diadem,
Scepter, and mantle, clasped with dewy gem,

¹Written in the spring of 1819, published in 1820.

²River of forgetfulness, in Hades.

³Queen of the lower world.

⁴The soul. Psyche was sometimes represented as a

Frighted away the Dryads and the Fauns
From rushes green, and brakes, and cow-
slipped lawns,

The ever-smitten Hermes empty left
His golden throne, bent warm on amorous
theft:

From high Olympus had he stolen light,
On this side of Jove's clouds, to escape the
sight

Of his great summoner, and made retreat
Into a forest on the shores of Crete.

For somewhere in that sacred island dwelt
A nymph to whom all hooféd Satyrs knelt;
At whose white feet the languid Tritons
poured

Pearls, while on land they withered and
adored.

Fast by the springs where she to bathe was
wont,

And in those meads where sometimes she
might haunt,

Were strewn rich gifts, unknown to any
Muse,

Though Fancy's casket were unlocked to
choose.

Ah, what a world of love was at her feet!
So Hermes thought, and a celestial heat

butterfly. Do not, says Keats, let insects who sym-
bolize death represent your mournful soul.

⁵Written in 1819 (finished apparently by 5 Septem-
ber), published in 1820. In a note appended to the poem
on its first publication Keats gave his source, as fol-
lows: "Philostratus in his fourth book *de Vita Apollonii*
[concerning the life of Apollonius], hath a memorable
instance in this kind, which I may not omit, of one
Menippus Lycius, a young man twenty-five years of
age, that going betwixt Cencreas and Corinth, met
such a phantasm in the habit of a fair gentlewoman,
which taking him by the hand, carried him home to her
house, in the suburbs of Corinth, and told him she was
a Phœnician by birth, and if he would tarry with her,
he should hear her sing and play, and drink such wine as
never any drank, and no man should molest him; but
she, being fair and lovely, would live and die with him,
that was fair and lovely to behold. The young man,
a philosopher, otherwise staid and discreet, able to
moderate his passions, though not this of love, tarried
with her a while to his great content, and at last mar-
ried her, to whose wedding, amongst other guests, came
Apollonius; who, by some probable conjectures, found
her out to be a serpent, a lamia; and that all her furni-
ture was, like Tantalus' gold, described by Homer, no
substance but mere illusions. When she saw herself
described, she wept, and desired Apollonius to be
silent, but he would not be moved, and thereupon she,
plate, house, and all that was in it, vanished in an
instant: many thousands took notice of this fact, for it
was done in the midst of Greece" (Burton's *Anatomy of*
Melancholy, pt. III, sec. ii, mem. 1, subs. i).

Burned from his wingéd heels to either ear,
That, from a whiteness as the lily clear,
Blushed into roses 'mid his golden hair,
Fallen in jealous curls about his shoulders
bare.

From vale to vale, from wood to wood, he
flew,
Breathing upon the flowers his passion new,
And wound with many a river to its head,
To find where this sweet nymph prepared her
secret bed:

In vain; the sweet nymph might nowhere be
found,

And so he rested on the lonely ground,
Pensive, and full of painful jealousies
Of the Wood-Gods, and even the very trees.
There as he stood, he heard a mournful voice,
Such as, once heard, in gentle heart destroys
All pain but pity; thus the lone voice spake:
"When from this wreathéd tomb shall I
awake?

When move in a sweet body fit for life,
And love, and pleasure, and the ruddy strife
Of hearts and lips? Ah, miserable me!"

"The God, dove-footed, glided silently
Round bush and tree, soft-brushing in his
speed

The taller grasses and full-flowering weed,
Until he found a palpitating snake,
Bright and cirque-couchant,¹ in a dusky
brake.

She was a gordian² shape of dazzling hue,
Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue;
Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson-barred;
And full of silver moons, that, as she
breathed,

Dissolved, or brighter shone, or inter-
wreathed

Their lusters with the gloomier tapestries—
So rainbow-sided, touched with miseries,
She seemed, at once, some penanced lady elf,
Some demon's mistress, or the demon's self.
Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire
Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar:³
Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet!
She had a woman's mouth with all its pearls
complete;

And for her eyes—what could such eyes do
there

But weep and weep, that they were born so
fair,

As Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian air?
Her throat was serpent, but the words she
spake

Came, as through bubbling honey, for Love's
sake,

And thus; while Hermes on his pinions lay,
Like a stooped falcon ere he takes his prey:

"Fair Hermes, crowned with feathers,
fluttering light,

I had a splendid dream of thee last night!

I saw thee sitting, on a throne of gold,
Among the Gods, upon Olympus old,
The only sad one; for thou didst not hear
The soft, lute-fingered Muses chaunting
clear,

Nor even Apollo when he sang alone,
Deaf to his throbbing throat's long, long
melodious moan.

I dreamed I saw thee, robed in purple flakes,
Break amorous through the clouds, as morn-
ing breaks,

And, swiftly as a bright Phœbean dart,⁴
Strike for the Cretan isle; and here thou art!
Too gentle Hermes, hast thou found the
maid?"

Whereat the star of Lethe⁵ not delayed
His rosy eloquence, and thus inquired:
"Thou smooth-lipped serpent, surely high-
inspired!

Thou beauteous wreath, with melancholy
eyes,

Possess whatever bliss thou canst devise,
Telling me only where my nymph is fled—
Where she doth breathe!" "Bright planet,
thou hast said,"

Returned the snake, "but seal with oaths,
fair God!"

"I swear," said Hermes, "by my serpent rod,
And by thine eyes, and by thy starry
crown!"

Light flew his earnest words, among the
blossoms blown.

Then thus again the brilliance feminine:
"Too frail of heart! for this lost nymph of
thine,

¹Lying coiled.

²Knotted.

³Bacchus gave Ariadne a tiara, or crown, of seven
stars which after her death became a constellation.

⁴As one of Phœbus Apollo's arrows.

⁵Hermes is so called because it was one of his duties
to lead the souls of the dead to Hades.

Free as the air, invisibly she strays
About these thornless wilds; her pleasant
days

She tastes unseen; unseen her nimble feet
Leave traces in the grass and flowers sweet:
From weary tendrils and bowed branches
green

She plucks the fruit unseen, she bathes un-
seen:

And by my power is her beauty veiled
To keep it unaffronted, unassailed
By the love-glances of unlovely eyes,
Of Satyrs, Fauns, and bleared Silenus¹ sighs.
Pale grew her immortality, for woe
Of all these lovers, and she grieved so
I took compassion on her, bade her steep
Her hair in weird syrops, that would keep
Her loveliness invisible, yet free
To wander as she loves, in liberty.
Thou shalt behold her, Hermes, thou alone,
If thou wilt, as thou swearest, grant my
boon."

Then, once again, the charmed² God began
An oath, and through the serpent's ears it ran
Warm, tremulous, devout, psalterian.²
Ravished, she lifted her Circean head,
Blushed a live damask, and swift-lipping said,
"I was a woman, let me have once more
A woman's shape, and charming as before.
I love a youth of Corinth—O the bliss!
Give me my woman's form, and place me
where he is.

Stoop, Hermes, let me breathe upon thy
brow,
And thou shalt see thy sweet nymph even
now."

The God on half-shut feathers sank serene,
She breathed upon his eyes, and swift was
seen

Of both the guarded nymph near-smiling on
the green.

It was no dream; or say a dream it was,
Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly
pass

Their pleasures in a long immortal dream.
One warm, flushed moment, hovering, it
might seem,

Dashed by the wood-nymph's beauty, so he
burned;

Then, lighting on the printless verdure,
turned

To the swooned serpent, and with languid
arm,

Delicate, put to proof the lithe Caducean
charm.³

So done, upon the nymph his eyes he bent
Full of adoring tears and blandishment,
And towards her stepped: she, like a moon in
wane,

Faded before him, cowered, nor could re-
strain

Her fearful sobs, self-folding like a flower
That faints into itself at evening hour:
But the God fostering her chilled hand,
She felt the warmth, her eyelids opened
bland,

And, like new flowers at morning song of
bees,

Bloomed, and gave up her honey to the lees.
Into the green-recessed woods they flew;
Nor grew they pale, as mortal lovers do.

Left to herself, the serpent now began
To change; her elfin blood in madness ran;
Her mouth foamed, and the grass, therewith
besprent,⁴

Withered at dew so sweet and virulent;
Her eyes in torture fixed, and anguish drear,
Hot, glazed, and wide, with lid-lashes all
sear,

Flashed phosphor and sharp sparks, without
one cooling tear.

The colors all inflamed throughout her train,
She writhed about, convulsed with scarlet
pain:

A deep volcanian yellow took the place
Of all her milder-mooned body's grace;

And, as the lava ravishes the mead,
Spoiled all her silver mail, and golden brede:⁵
Made gloom of all her frecklings, streaks, and
bars,

Eclipsed her crescents, and licked up her
stars:

So that, in moments few, she was undressed
Of all her sapphires, greens, and amethyst,
And rubious-argent: of all these bereft,
Nothing but pain and ugliness were left.

Still shone her crown; that vanished, also she
Melted and disappeared as suddenly;

And in the air, her new voice luting soft,
Cried, "Lycius! gentle Lycius!"—Borne aloft

¹Caduceus was the name of Hermes' wand.

²Sprinkled.

³Embroidery.

¹Foster-father of Bacchus.

²Musical.

With the bright mists about the mountains
hoar
These words dissolved: Crete's forests heard
no more.

Whither fled Lamia, now a lady bright,
A full-born beauty new and exquisite?
She fled into that valley they pass o'er
Who go to Corinth from Cenchreas' shore;
And rested at the foot of those wild hills,
The rugged founts of the Peræan rills,
And of that other ridge whose barren back
Stretches, with all its mist and cloudy rack,
South-westward to Cleone. There she stood,
About a young bird's flutter from a wood,
Fair, on a sloping green of mossy tread,
By a clear pool, wherein she passionéd
To see herself escaped from so sore ills,
While her robes flaunted with the daffodils.

Ah, happy Lycius!—for she was a maid
More beautiful than ever twisted braid,
Or sighed, or blushed, or on spring-flowered
lea

Spread a green kirtle to the minstrelsy:
A virgin purest lipped, yet in the lore
Of love deep learned to the red heart's core:
Not one hour old, yet of sciential brain
To unperplex bliss from its neighbor pain;
Define their pettish limits, and estrange
Their points of contact, and swift counter-
change;

Intrigue with the specious chaos,¹ and dis-
part

Its most ambiguous atoms with sure art;
As though in Cupid's college she had spent
Sweet days a lovely graduate, still unshent,²
And kept his rosy terms in idle languishment.

Why this fair creature chose so faerily
By the wayside to linger, we shall see;
But first 'tis fit to tell how she could muse
And dream, when in the serpent prison-
house,

Of all she list, strange or magnificent:
How, ever, where she willed her spirit went;
Whether to faint Elysium, or where
Down through tress-lifting waves the
Nereids³ fair

Wind into Thetis' bower by many a pearly
stair;

¹The fair-appearing confusion of joy and pain.

²Yet unrepurchased.

³Sea-nymphs, sisters of Thetis.

Or where God Bacchus drains his cups divine,
Stretched out, at ease, beneath a glutinous
pine;

Or where in Pluto's gardens palatine⁴
Mulciber's columns gleam in far piazzan line.⁵
And sometimes into cities she would send
Her dream, with feast and rioting to blend;
And once, while among mortals dreaming thus,
She saw the young Corinthian Lycius
Charioting foremost in the envious race,
Like a young Jove with calm uneager face,
And fell into a swooning love of him.
Now on the moth-time of that evening dim
He would return that way, as well she knew,
To Corinth from the shore; for freshly blew
The eastern soft-wind, and his galley now
Grated the quay-stones with her brazen prow
In port Cenchreas, from Egina isle
Fresh anchored; whither he had been awhile
To sacrifice to Jove, whose temple there
Waits with high marble doors for blood and
incense rare.

Jove heard his vows, and bettered his desire;
For by some freakful chance he made retire
From his companions, and set forth to walk,
Perhaps grown wearied of their Corinth talk:
Over the solitary hills he fared,
Thoughtless, at first, but ere eve's star ap-
peared

His phantasy was lost, where reason fades,
In the calmed twilight of Platonic shades.⁶
Lamia beheld him coming, near, more near—
Close to her passing, in indifference drear,
His silent sandals swept the mossy green;
So neighbored to him, and yet so unseen,
She stood: he passed, shut up in mysteries,
His mind wrapped like his mantle, while her
eyes

Followed his steps, and her neck regal white
Turned—syllabing thus: "Ah, Lycius
bright,

And will you leave me on the hills alone?
Lycius, look back! and be some pity shown."
He did; not with cold wonder, fearfully,
But Orpheus-like at an Eurydice;⁷

⁴Palatial.

⁵Vulcan's columns gleam, forming covered walks.

⁶His thoughtless fancies disappeared while he considered the mysteries of Plato's philosophy.

⁷Orpheus succeeded in winning back his wife Eurydice from the world of shades on condition that as they returned to the world he would not look back to see her following him. He, however, so loved her that he could not forbear looking back—whereupon she vanished and returned to Hades.

For so delicious were the words she sung,
It seemed he had loved them a whole summer
long.

And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty up,
Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,
And still the cup was full,—while he, afraid
Lest she should vanish ere his lip had paid
Due adoration, thus began to adore,—
Her soft look growing coy, she saw his chain
so sure:

"Leave thee alone! Look back! Ah, Goddess, see

Whether my eyes can ever turn from thee!
For pity do not this sad heart belie—
Even as thou vanishest so I shall die.
Stay! though a Naiad of the rivers, stay!
To thy far wishes will, thy streams obey:
Stay! though the greenest woods be thy
domain,

Alone they can drink up the morning rain;
Though a descended Pleiad,¹ will not one
Of thine harmonious sisters keep in tune
Thy spheres, and as thy silver proxy shine?
So sweetly to these ravished ears of mine
Came thy sweet greeting, that if thou
shouldst fade,

Thy memory will waste me to a shade:—
For pity do not melt!" "If I should stay,"
Said Lamia, "here, upon this floor of clay,
And pain my steps upon these flowers too
rough,

What canst thou say or do of charm enough
To dull the nice remembrance of my home?
Thou canst not ask me with thee here to
roam

Over these hills and vales, where no joy
is,—

Empty of immortality and bliss!
Thou art a scholar, Lycius, and must know
That finer spirits cannot breathe below
In human climes, and live. Alas! poor
youth,

What taste of purer air hast thou to soothe
My essence? What serener palaces,
Where I may all my many senses please,
And by mysterious sleights a hundred thirsts
appease?

It cannot be—adieu!" So said, she rose
Tiptoe, with white arms spread. He, sick to
lose

¹The Pleiads were seven sisters, changed into the constellation. The concentric spheres which, according to the old astronomy, surrounded the earth, were supposed to make music as they revolved.

The amorous promise of her lone complain,
Swooned, murmuring of love, and pale with
pain.

The cruel lady, without any show
Of sorrow for her tender favorite's woe,
But rather, if her eyes could brighter be,
With brighter eyes and slow amenity,
Put her new lips to his, and gave afresh
The life she had so tangled in her mesh:
And as he from one trance was wakening
Into another, she began to sing,—
Happy in beauty, life, and love, and every-
thing,—

A song of love, too sweet for earthly lyres,
While, like held breath, the stars drew in
their panting fires.

And then she whispered in such trembling
tone

As those who, safe together met alone
For the first time through many anguished
days,

Use other speech than looks; bidding him
raise

His drooping head, and clear his soul of
doubt,

For that she was a woman, and without
Any more subtle fluid in her veins
Than throbbing blood, and that the self-
same pains

Inhabited her frail-strung heart as his.
And next she wondered how his eyes could
miss

Her face so long in Corinth, where, she said,
She dwelt but half retired, and there had
led

Days happy as the gold coin could invent
Without the aid of love; yet in content,
Till she saw him, as once she passed him by
Where 'gainst a column he leaned thought-
fully

At Venus' temple porch, 'mid baskets heaped
Of amorous herbs and flowers, newly reaped
Late on that eve, as 'twas the night before
The Adonian feast;² whereof she saw no
more,

But wept alone those days,—for why should
she adore?

Lycius from death awoke into amaze
To see her still, and singing so sweet lays;
Then from amaze into delight he fell
To hear her whisper woman's lore so well;

²Festival in honor of Adonis. He was a beautiful youth loved by Venus. When he was killed by a wild boar she had him carried to Elysium.

And every word she spake enticed him on
 To unperplexed delight and pleasure known.
 Let the mad poets say whate'er they please
 Of the sweets of Faeries, Peris,¹ Goddesses,
 There is not such a treat among them all—
 Haunters of cavern, lake, and waterfall—
 As a real woman, lineal indeed
 From Pyrrha's pebbles² or old Adam's
 seed.

Thus gentle Lamia judged, and judged
 aright,

That Lycius could not love in half a fright,
 So threw the goddess off, and won his heart
 More pleasantly by playing woman's part,
 With no more awe than what her beauty
 gave,

That, while it smote, still guaranteed to save.
 Lycius to all made eloquent reply,
 Marrying to every word a twin-born sigh;
 And last, pointing to Corinth, asked her
 sweet,

If 'twas too far that night for her soft feet.
 The way was short, for Lamia's eagerness
 Made, by a spell, the triple league decrease
 To a few paces; not at all surmised
 By blinded Lycius, so in her comprised.
 They passed the city gates, he knew not how,
 So noiseless, and he never thought to know.

As men talk in a dream, so Corinth all,
 Throughout her palaces imperial,
 And all her populous streets and temples
 lewd,
 Muttered, like tempest in the distance
 brewed,
 To the wide-spreaded night above her towers.
 Men, women, rich and poor, in the cool
 hours,
 Shuffled their sandals o'er the pavement
 white,
 Companioned or alone; while many a light
 Flared, here and there, from wealthy festi-
 vals,
 And threw their moving shadows on the
 walls,
 Or found them clustered in the corniced
 shade
 Of some arched temple door or dusky colon-
 nade.

¹A Peri is, according to Persian fable, one descended from the fallen angels.

²After the flood Pyrrha and Deucalion, according to legend, cast stones behind them which sprang up human beings, and so they re-peopled the world.

Muffling his face, of greeting friends in
 fear,
 Her finger he pressed hard, as one came near
 With curled gray beard, sharp eyes, and
 smooth bald crown,
 Slow-stepped, and robed in philosophic
 gown:

Lycius shrank closer, as they met and
 passed,
 Into his mantle, adding wings to haste,
 While hurried Lamia trembled. "Ah,"
 said he,

"Why do you shudder, love, so ruefully?
 Why does your tender palm dissolve in
 dew?"—

"I'm wearied," said fair Lamia: "tell me
 who

Is that old man? I cannot bring to mind
 His features:—Lycius! wherefore did you
 blind

Yourself from his quick eyes?" Lycius
 replied,

"'Tis Apollonius sage, my trusty guide
 And good instructor; but to-night he seems
 The ghost of folly haunting my sweet
 dreams."

While yet he spake they had arrived be-
 fore

A pillared porch, with lofty portal door,
 Where hung a silver lamp, whose phosphor
 glow

Reflected in the slabbéd steps below,
 Mild as a star in water; for so new
 And so unsullied was the marble's hue,
 So through the crystal polish, liquid fine,
 Ran the dark veins, that none but feet
 divine

Could e'er have touched there. Sounds
 Æolian³

Breathed from the hinges, as the ample span
 Of the wide doors disclosed a place unknown
 Some time to any, but those two alone,
 And a few Persian mutes, who that same year
 Were seen about the markets: none knew
 where

They could inhabit; the most curious
 Were foiled, who watched to trace them to
 their house:

And but the flitter-wingéd verse⁴ must tell,
 For truth's sake, what woe afterwards befell,

³Musical sounds.

⁴The verse winging its way like a bird.

"Would humor many a heart to leave them
thus
Shut from the busy world of more incred-
ulous.

PART II

LOVE in a hut, with water and a crust,
Is—Love, forgive us!—cinders, ashes, dust;
Love in a palace is perhaps at last
More grievous torment than a hermit's
fast:—

That is a doubtful tale from faery land,
Hard for the non-elect to understand.
Had Lycius lived to hand his story down,
He might have given the moral a fresh
frown,
Or blenched it quite: but too short was their
bliss

To breed distrust and hate, that make the
soft voice hiss.

Besides, there, nightly, with terrific glare,
Love, jealous grown of so complete a pair,
Hovered and buzzed his wings, with fearful
roar,

Above the lintel of their chamber door,
And down the passage cast a glow upon the
floor.

For all this came a ruin: side by side
They were enthronéd, in the eventide,
Upon a couch, near to a curtaining
Whose airy texture, from a golden string,
Floated into the room, and let appear
Unveiled the summer heaven, blue and clear,
Betwixt two marble shafts:—there they re-
posed,
Where use had made it sweet, with eyelids
closed,
Saving a tithé which love still open kept,
That they might see each other while they
almost slept;

When from the slope side of a suburb hill,
Deafening the swallow's twitter, came a
thrill

Of trumpets—Lycius started—the sounds
fled,

But left a thought, a buzzing in his head.
For the first time, since first he harbored in
That purple-lined palace of sweet sin,
His spirit passed beyond its golden bourn
Into the noisy world almost forsworn.
The lady, ever watchful, penetrant,
Saw this with pain, so arguing a want

Of something more, more than her empery
Of joys; and she began to moan and sigh
Because he mused beyond her, knowing
well

That but a moment's thought is passion's
passing bell.

"Why do you sigh, fair creature?" whispered
he:

"Why do you think?" returned she tenderly:
"You have deserted me; where am I now?
Not in your heart while care weighs on your
brow:

No, no, you have dismissed me, and I go
From your breast houseless: ay, it must be
so."

He answered, bending to her open eyes,
Where he was mirrored small in paradise,
"My silver planet, both of eve and morn!
Why will you plead yourself so sad forlorn,
While I am striving how to fill my heart
With deeper crimson and a double smart?
How to entangle, trammel up, and snare
Your soul in mine, and labyrinth you there
Like the hid scent in an unbudded rose?
Ay, a sweet kiss—you see your mighty woes.
My thoughts! shall I unveil them? Listen
then!

What mortal hath a prize, that other men
May be confounded and abashed withal,
But lets it sometimes pace abroad majestic,
And triumph, as in thee I should rejoice
Amid the hoarse alarm of Corinth's voice.

Let my foes choke, and my friends shout
afar,

While through the throngéd streets your
bridal car

Wheels round its dazzling spokes."—The
lady's cheek

Trembled; she nothing said, but, pale and
meek,

Arose and knelt before him, wept a rain
Of sorrows at his words; at last with pain
Beseeching him, the while his hand she
wrung,

To change his purpose. He thereat was
stung,

Perverse, with stronger fancy to reclaim
Her wild and timid nature to his aim;
Besides, for all his love, in self despite,
Against his better self, he took delight
Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new.
His passion, cruel grown, took on a hue
Fierce and sanguineous as 'twas possible
In one whose brow had no dark veins to swell.

Fine was the mitigated fury, like
 Apollo's presence when in act to strike
 The serpent—Ha, the serpent! certes, she
 Was none. She burned, she loved the
 tyranny,
 And, all subdued, consented to the hour
 When to the bridal he shall lead his para-
 mour.
 Whispering in midnight silence, said the
 youth,
 "Sure some sweet name thou hast, though,
 by my truth,
 I have not asked it, ever thinking thee
 Not mortal, but of heavenly progeny,
 As still I do. Hast any mortal name,
 Fit appellation for this dazzling frame?
 Or friends or kinsfolk on the cited earth,
 To share our marriage feast and nuptial
 mirth?"
 "I have no friends," said Lamia, "no, not
 one;
 My presence in wide Corinth hardly known:
 My parents' bones are in their dusty urns
 Sepulchered, where no kindled incense
 burns,
 *Seeing all their luckless race are dead save
 me,
 And I neglect the holy rite for thee.
 Even as you list invite your many guests;
 But if, as now it seems, your vision rests
 With any pleasure on me, do not bid
 Old Apollonius—from him keep me hid."
 Lycius, perplexed at words so blind and
 blank,
 Made close inquiry; from whose touch she
 shrank,
 Feigning a sleep; and he to the dull shade
 Of deep sleep in a moment was betrayed.

It was the custom then to bring away
 The bride from home at blushing shut of day,
 Veiled, in a chariot, heralded along
 By strewn flowers, torches, and a marriage
 song,
 With other pageants: but this fair unknown
 Had not a friend. So being left alone
 (Lycius was gone to summon all his kin),
 And knowing surely she could never win
 His foolish heart from its mad pompousness,
 She set herself, high-thoughted, how to dress
 The misery in fit magnificence.
 She did so, but 'tis doubtful how and whence
 Came, and who were her subtle servitors.
 About the halls, and to and from the doors,

There was a noise of wings, till in short space
 The glowing banquet-room shone with
 wide-archéd grace.
 A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone
 Supportress of the faery-roof, made moan
 Throughout, as fearful the whole charm
 might fade.
 Fresh carved cedar, mimicking a glade
 Of palm and plantain, met from either side,
 High in the midst, in honor of the bride:
 Two palms and then two plantains, and so
 on,
 From either side their stems branched one to
 one
 All down the aisled place; and beneath all
 There ran a stream of lamps straight on from
 wall to wall.
 So canopied, lay an untasted feast
 Teeming with odors. Lamia, regal dressed,
 Silently paced about, and as she went,
 In pale contented sort of discontent,
 Missioned her viewless servants to enrich
 The fretted splendor of each nook and niche.
 Between the tree-stems, marbled plain at
 first,
 Came jasper panels; then anon there burst
 Forth creeping imagery of slighter trees,
 And with the larger wove in small intricacies.
 Approving all, she faded at self-will,
 And shut the chamber up, close, hushed and
 still,
 Complete and ready for the revels rude,
 When dreadful guests would come to spoil
 her solitude.

The day appeared, and all the gossip rout.
 O senseless Lycius! Madman! wherefore flout
 The silent-blessing fate, warm cloistered
 hours,
 And show to common eyes these secret
 bowers?
 The herd approached; each guest, with busy
 brain,
 Arriving at the portal, gazed amain,
 And entered marveling: for they knew the
 street,
 Remembered it from childhood all complete
 Without a gap, yet ne'er before had seen
 That royal porch, that high-built fair
 demesne;¹
 So in they hurried all, mazed, curious and
 keen;

¹Dwelling.

Save one, who looked thereon with eye
severe,
And with calm-planted steps walked in austere;

'Twas Apollonius: something too he laughed,
As though some knotty problem, that had
daft

His patient thought, had now begun to thaw
And solve and melt: 'twas just as he foresaw.

He met within the murmurous vestibule
His young disciple. "'Tis no common rule,
Lycius," said he, "for uninvited guest
To force himself upon you, and infest
With an unbidden presence the bright throng
Of younger friends; yet must I do this wrong,
And you forgive me." Lycius blushed, and
led

The old man through the inner doors broad-
spread;

With reconciling words and courteous mien
Turning into sweet milk the sophist's spleen.

Of wealthy luster was the banquet-room,
Filled with pervading brilliance and perfume:
Before each lucid panel fuming stood
A censer fed with myrrh and spiced wood,
Each by a sacred tripod held aloft,
Whose slender feet wide-swerved upon the
soft

Wool-woofed carpets: fifty wreaths of smoke
From fifty censers their light voyage took
To the high roof, still mimicked as they rose
Along the mirrored walls by twin-clouds
odorous.

Twelve spheréd tables by silk seats in-
spheréd,

High as the level of a man's breast reared
On libbard's¹ paws, upheld the heavy gold
Of cups and goblets; and the store thrice
told

Of Ceres' horn,² and, in huge vessels, wine
Come from the gloomy tun with merry shine.
Thus loaded with a feast the tables stood,
Each shring in the midst the image of a
God.

When in an antechamber every guest
Had felt the cold full sponge to pleasure
pressed,

¹Leopard's.

²Ceres was the goddess of harvests. The horn was symbolic of plenty.

By ministering slaves, upon his hands and
feet,

And fragrant oils with ceremony meet
Poured on his hair, they all moved to the
feast

In white robes, and themselves in order
placed

Around the silken couches, wondering
Whence all this mighty cost and blaze of
wealth could spring.

Soft went the music the soft air along,
While fluent Greek a voweled under-song
Kept up among the guests, discoursing low
At first, for scarcely was the wine at flow;
But when the happy vintage touched their
brains,

Louder they talk, and louder come the strains
Of powerful instruments:—the gorgeous
dyes,

The space, the splendor of the draperies,
The roof of awful richness, nectarous cheer,
Beautiful slaves, and Lamia's self, appear,
Now, when the wine has done its rosy deed,
And every soul from human trammels
freed,

No more so strange; for merry wine, sweet
wine,

Will make Elysian shades not too fair, too
divine.

Soon was God Bacchus at meridian height;
Flushed were their cheeks, and bright eyes
double bright;

Garlands of every green and every scent
From vales deflowered or forest-trees branch-
rent,

In baskets of bright osiered gold³ were
brought,

High as the handles heaped, to suit the
thought

Of every guest; that each, as he did please,
Might fancy-fit his brows, silk-pillowed at his
ease.

What wreath for Lamia? What for
Lycius?

What for the sage, old Apollonius?
Upon her aching forehead be there hung
The leaves of willow⁴ and of adder's tongue;

³Baskets of woven gold.

⁴The weeping-willow, symbolic of grief. "Adder's tongue" is the popular name for a certain variety of fern.

And for the youth, quick, let us strip for him
The thyrsus,¹ that his watching eyes may
swim

Into forgetfulness; and, for the sage,
Let spear-grass and the spiteful thistle wage
War on his temples. Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?
There was an awful rainbow once in heaven:
We know her woof, her texture; she is given
In the dull catalogue of common things.
Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
Empty the haunted air and gnoméd mine—
Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made
The tender-personed Lamia melt into a
shade.

By her glad Lycius sitting, in chief place,
Scarce saw in all the room another face,
Till, checking his love trance, a cup he took
Full brimmed, and opposite sent forth a look
'Cross the broad table, to beseech a glance
From his old teacher's wrinkled counte-
nance,

And pledge him. The bald-head philosopher
Had fixed his eye, without a twinkle or stir,
Full on the alarméd beauty of the bride,
Brow-beating her fair form and troubling her
sweet pride.

Lycius then pressed her hand, with devout
touch,

As pale it lay upon the rosy couch:

"Twas icy, and the cold ran through his
veins;

Then sudden it grew hot, and all the pains
Of an unnatural heat shot to his heart.

"Lamia, what means this? Wherefore dost
thou start?

Know'st thou that man?" Poor Lamia an-
swered not.

He gazed into her eyes, and not a jot
Owned they the lovelorn piteous appeal:
More, more he gazed: his human senses reel:
Some hungry spell that loveliness absorbs;
There was no recognition in those orbs.

"Lamia!" he cried—and no soft-toned reply.
The many heard, and the loud revelry
Grew hush; the stately music no more
breathes;

The myrtle sickened in a thousand wreaths.
By faint degrees, voice, lute, and pleasure
ceased;

A deadly silence step by step increased

Until it seemed a horrid presence there,
And not a man but felt the terror in his hair.
"Lamia!" he shrieked; and nothing but the
shriek

With its sad echo did the silence break.

"Begone, foul dream!" he cried, gazing again
In the bride's face, where now no azure vein
Wandered on fair-spaced temples, no soft
bloom

Misted the cheek, no passion to illumine
The deep-recesséd vision:—all was blight;
Lamia, no longer fair, there sat, a deadly
white.

"Shut, shut those juggling eyes, thou ruth-
less man!

Turn them aside, wretch! or the righteous
ban

Of all the Gods, whose dreadful images
Here represent their shadowy presences,
May pierce them on the sudden with the
thorn

Of painful blindness; leaving thee forlorn,
In trembling dotage to the feeblest fright
Of conscience, for their long-offended might,
For all thine impious proud-heart sophistries,
Unlawful magic, and enticing lies.

Corinthians! look upon that gray-beard
wretch!

Mark how, possessed, his lashless eyelids
stretch

Around his demon eyes! Corinthians, see!
My sweet bride withers at their potency."

"Fool!" said the sophist, in an undertone
Gruff with contempt; which a death-nighing
moan

From Lycius answered, as, heart-struck and
lost,

He sank supine beside the aching ghost.

"Fool! Fool!" repeated he, while his eyes
still

Relented not, nor moved; "from every ill
Of life have I preserved thee to this day,
And shall I see thee made a serpent's prey?"
Then Lamia breathed death-breath; the
sophist's eye,

Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly,
Keen, cruel, perçant,² stinging: she, as well
As her weak hand could any meaning tell,
Motioned him to be silent; vainly so;
He looked and looked again a level—No!
"A serpent!" echoed he; no sooner said,
Than with a frightful scream she vanished;

¹A rod wreathed with ivy, the staff of Bacchus.

²Piercing.

And Lycius' arms were empty of delight,
 As were his limbs of life, from that same
 night.
 On the high couch he lay—his friends came
 round—
 Supported him; no pulse or breath they
 found,
 And in its marriage robe the heavy body
 wound.

HYPERION¹

BOOK I

DEEP in the shady sadness of a vale
 Far sunken from the healthy breath of
 morn,
 Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
 Sat gray-haired Saturn, quiet as a stone,
 Still as the silence round about his lair;
 Forest on forest hung about his head
 Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was
 there,
 Not so much life as on a summer's day
 Robs not one light seed from the feathered
 grass,
 But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.
 A stream went voiceless by, still deadened
 more
 By reason of his fallen divinity
 Spreading a shade: the Naiad 'mid her reeds
 Pressed her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks
 went,
 No further than to where his feet had
 strayed,

¹Written towards the end of 1817 and in the opening months of 1818; published in 1820. Keats wrote two books and part of a third, but left the poem unfinished. The theme is the overthrow of the Titans, or earlier gods, by the later Olympian gods under the leadership of Zeus (Jupiter), son of the Titan Saturn. The situation at the opening of the poem is as follows: "Saturn, king of the gods, has been driven from Olympus down into a deep dell, by his son Jupiter, who has seized and used his father's weapon, the thunderbolt. A similar fate has overtaken nearly all his brethren, who are called by Keats Titans and Giants indiscriminately, though in Greek mythology the two races are quite distinct. These Titans are the children of Tellus and Cœlus, the earth and sky, thus representing, as it were, the first birth of form and personality from formless nature. Before the separation of earth and sky, Chaos, a confusion of the elements of all things, had reigned supreme. One only of the Titans, Hyperion the sun-god, still keeps his kingdom, and he is about to be superseded by young Apollo, the god of light and song" (Robertson).

And slept there since. Upon the sodden
 ground
 His old right hand lay nerveless, listless,
 dead,
 Unaccepted; and his realmless eyes were
 closed;
 While his bowed head seemed list'ning to the
 Earth,
 His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seemed no force could wake him from
 his place;
 But there came one,² who with a kindred
 hand
 Touched his wide shoulders, after bending
 low
 With reverence, though to one who knew it
 not.
 She was a Goddess of the infant world;
 By her in stature the tall Amazon
 Had stood a pigmy's height: she would have
 ta'en
 Achilles by the hair and bent his neck;
 Or with a finger stayed Ixion's wheel.³
 Her face was large as that of Memphian
 sphinx,
 Pedestaled haply in a palace-court,
 When sages looked to Egypt for their lore.
 But oh! how unlike marble was that face:
 How beautiful, if sorrow had not made
 Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.
 There was a listening fear in her regard,
 As if calamity had but begun;
 As if the vanward clouds of evil days
 Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
 Was with its storéd thunder laboring up.
 One hand she pressed upon that aching spot
 Where beats the human heart, as if just
 there,
 Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain:
 The other upon Saturn's bended neck
 She laid, and to the level of his ear
 Leaning with parted lips, some words she
 spake
 In solemn tenor and deep organ tone:
 Some mourning words, which in our feeble
 tongue
 Would come in these like accents; O how frail
 To that large utterance of the early Gods!
 "Saturn, look up!—though wherefore, poor
 old King?

²Thea, moon-goddess, also a Titan.

³Ixion was bound to a continually revolving wheel in Hades, as a punishment for his boastfulness.

I have no comfort for thee, no not one:
 I cannot say, 'O wherefore sleepest thou?'
 For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth
 Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God;
 And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,
 Has from thy scepter passed; and all the air
 Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.
 Thy thunder, conscious of the new command,
 Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;
 And thy sharp lightning in unpractised
 hands

Scorches and burns our once serene domain.
 O aching time! O moments big as years!
 All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth,
 And press it so upon our weary griefs
 That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
 Saturn, sleep on:—O thoughtless, why did I
 Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?
 Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?
 Saturn, sleep on! while at thy feet I weep."

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
 Those green-robed senators of mighty
 woods,

Tall oaks, branch-charméd by the earnest
 stars,

Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,
 Save from one gradual solitary gust
 Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,
 As if the ebbing air had but one wave:
 So came these words and went; the while in
 tears

She touched her fair large forehead to the
 ground,

Just where her falling hair might be out-
 spread

A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.
 One moon, with alteration slow, had shed
 Her silver seasons four upon the night,
 And still these two were postured motionless,
 Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern;
 The frozen God still couchant on the earth,
 And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet:
 Until at length old Saturn lifted up

His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone,
 And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
 And that fair kneeling Goddess; and then
 spake,

As with a palsied tongue, and while his
 beard

Shook horrid with such aspen malady:
 "O tender spouse of gold Hyperion,
 Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face;
 Look up, and let me see our doom in it;

Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape
 Is Saturn's; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice
 Of Saturn; tell me, if this wrinkling brow,
 Naked and bare of its great diadem,
 Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had
 power

To make me desolate? whence came the
 strength?

How was it nurtured to such bursting forth,
 While Fate seemed strangled in my nervous¹
 grasp?

But it is so; and I am smothered up,
 And buried from all godlike exercise
 Of influence benign on planets pale,
 Of admonitions to the winds and seas,
 Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting,
 And all those acts which Deity supreme
 Doth ease its heart of love in. I am gone
 Away from my own bosom: I have left
 My strong identity, my real self,
 Somewhere between the throne, and where I
 sit

Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea,
 search,

Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them
 round

Upon all space: space starred, and lorn of
 light,

Space regioned with life-air, and barren void,
 Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell.

Search, Thea, search! and tell me if thou
 seest

A certain shape or shadow, making way
 With wings or chariot fierce to repossess
 A heaven he lost erewhile: it must—it must
 Be of ripe progress²—Saturn must be king!
 Yes, there must be a golden victory;
 There must be Gods thrown down, and
 trumpets blown

Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival
 Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,
 Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir
 Of strings in hollow shells;³ and there shall
 be

Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
 Of the sky-children; I will give command:
 Thea! Thea! Thea! where is Saturn?"

This passion lifted him upon his feet,
 And massed his hands to struggle in the air,

¹Powerful.

²Be close at hand.

³The earliest stringed instruments were said to have
 been made by stretching strings over hollow shells.

His Druid locks to shake and ooze with sweat,
His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.
He stood, and heard not Thea's sobbing deep;

A little time, and then again he snatched
Utterance thus:—"But cannot I create?
Cannot I form? Cannot I fashion forth
Another world, another universe,
To overbear and crumble this to nought?
Where is another chaos? Where?" That word

Found way unto Olympus, and made quake
The rebel three.¹ Thea was startled up,
And in her bearing was a sort of hope,
As thus she quick-voiced spake, yet full of awe.

"This cheers our fallen house: come to our friends,
O Saturn! come away, and give them heart;
I know the covert, for thence came I hither."
Thus brief; then with beseeching eyes she went

With backward footing through the shade a space:

He followed, and she turned to lead the way
Through aged boughs, that yielded like the mist

Which eagles cleave, upmounting from their nest.

Meanwhile in other realms big tears were shed,

More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,
Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe:
The Titans fierce, self-hid or prison-bound,
Groaned for the old allegiance once more,
And listened in sharp pain for Saturn's voice.
But one of the whole mammoth-brood still kept

His sovereignty, and rule, and majesty;—
Blazing Hyperion on his orbéd fire
Still sat, still snuffed the incense, teeming up
From man to the sun's God, yet insecure:
For as among us mortals omens drear
Fright and perplex, so also shuddered he,
Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech,

Or the familiar visiting of one
Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,
Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp;

But horrors, portioned to a giant nerve,
Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace bright,
Bastioned with pyramids of glowing gold,
And touched with shade of bronzed obelisks,
Glared a blood-red through all its thousand courts,

Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries;
And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds
Flushed angrily: while sometimes eagles' wings,²

Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,
Darkened the place; and neighing steeds were heard,

Not heard before by Gods or wondering men.
Also, when he would taste the spicy wreaths
Of incense, breathed aloft from sacred hills,
Instead of sweets, his ample palate took

Savor of poisonous brass and metal sick:
And so, when harbored in the sleepy west,
After the full completion of fair day,
For³ rest divine upon exalted couch,
And slumber in the arms of melody,
He paced away the pleasant hours of ease
With stride colossal, on from hall to hall;
While far within each aisle and deep recess,
His wingéd minions in close clusters stood,
Amazed and full of fear; like anxious men
Who on wide plains gather in panting troops,

When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers.

Even now, while Saturn, roused from icy trance,

Went step for step with Thea through the woods,

Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
Came slope upon the threshold of the west;
Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope
In smoothest silence, save what solemn tubes,
Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet
And wandering sounds, slow-breathéd melodies;

And like a rose in vermeil⁴ tint and shape,
In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye,
That inlet to severe magnificence
Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He entered, but he entered full of wrath;
His flaming robes streamed out beyond his heels,

²The eagle was the bird of Jupiter.

³In place of.

⁴Blood-red.

¹Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto.

And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,
 That scared away the meek ethereal Hours¹
 And made their dove-wings tremble. On he
 flared
 From stately nave to nave, from vault to
 vault,
 Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathéd
 light,
 And diamond-pavéd lustrous long arcades,
 Until he reached the great main cupola;
 There standing fierce beneath, he stamped
 his foot,
 And from the basements deep to the high
 towers
 Jarred his own golden region; and before
 The quavering thunder thereupon had
 ceased,
 His voice leaped out, despite of godlike curb,
 To this result: "O dreams of day and night!
 O monstrous forms! O effigies² of pain!
 O specters busy in a cold, cold gloom!
 O lank-eared Phantoms of black-weeded
 pools!
 Why do I know ye? why have I seen ye?
 why
 Is my eternal essence thus distraught
 To see and to behold these horrors new?
 Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall?
 Am I to leave this haven of my rest,
 This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,
 This calm luxuriance of blissful light,
 These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes,
 Of all my lucent empire? It is left
 Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine.
 The blaze, the splendor, and the symmetry,
 I cannot see—but darkness, death and dark-
 ness.
 Even here, into my center of repose,
 The shady visions come to domineer,
 Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp—
 Fall!—No, by Tellus and her briny robes!
 Over the fiery frontier of my realms
 I will advance a terrible right arm
 Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel
 Jove,
 And bid old Saturn take his throne again."
 He spake, and ceased, the while a heavier
 threat
 Held struggle with his throat, but came not
 forth;
 For as in theaters of crowded men

Hubbub increases more they call out
 "Hush!"

So at Hyperion's words the Phantoms pale
 Bestirred themselves, thrice horrible and
 cold;

And from the mirrored level where he stood
 A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.

At this, through all his bulk an agony
 Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown,
 Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular
 Making slow way, with head and neck con-
 vulsed

From over-strained might. Released, he
 fled

To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours
 Before the dawn in season due should blush,
 He breathed fierce breath against the sleepy
 portals,

Cleared them of heavy vapors, burst them
 wide

Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.
 The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode
 Each day from east to west the heavens
 through,

Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds;
 Nor therefore veiled quite, blindfold and hid,
 But ever and anon the glancing spheres,
 Circles, and arcs, and broad-belting colure,³
 Glowed through, and wrought upon the
 muffling dark

Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir deep
 Up to the zenith—hieroglyphics old,
 Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers
 Then living on the earth, with laboring
 thought

Won from the gaze of many centuries:
 Now lost, save what we find on remnants
 huge

Of stone, or marble swart; their import gone,
 Their wisdom long since fled.⁴ Two wings
 this orb

Possessed for glory, two fair argent wings,
 Ever exalted at the God's approach:
 And now, from forth the gloom their plumes
 immense

³Either of two great circles of the sphere of the heavens intersecting at the poles, one passing through the equinoctial points, the other at right angles to it. It is not clear, however, that Keats is using the word in its exact sense. "Nadir" is the lowest point in the heavens, "Zenith" the highest.

⁴The glancing lights cast by the sun, Keats says, formed symbols which sages in the course of time interpreted. But the wisdom thus won has long since been lost.

¹Goddesses of the seasons.

²Visions.

Rose, one by one, till all outspreaded were;
While still the dazzling globe maintained
eclipse,

Awaiting for Hyperion's command.
Fain would he have commanded, fain took
throne

And bid the day begin, if but for change.
He might not:—No, though a primeval God:
The sacred seasons might not be disturbed.
Therefore the operations of the dawn
Stayed in their birth, even as here 'tis told.
Those silver wings expanded sisterly,
Eager to sail their orb; the porches wide
Opened upon the dusk demesnes¹ of night;
And the bright Titan, frenzied with new
woes,

Unused to bend, by hard compulsion bent
His spirit to the sorrow of the time;
And all along a dismal rack of clouds,
Upon the boundaries of day and night,
He stretched himself in grief and radiance
faint.

There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars
Looked down on him with pity, and the
voice

Of Cœlus, from the universal space,
Thus whispered low and solemn in his ear:
"O brightest of my children dear, earth-born
And sky-engendered, Son of Mysteries
All unrevealed even to the powers
Which met at thy creating! at whose joys
And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,
I, Cœlus, wonder how they came and
whence;

And at the fruits thereof what shapes they
be,

Distinct, and visible; symbols divine,
Manifestations of that beauteous life
Diffused unseen throughout eternal space;
Of these new-formed art thou, oh brightest
child!

Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses!
There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion

Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,
I saw my firstborn² tumbled from his throne!
To me his arms were spread, to me his voice
Found way from forth the thunders round
his head!

Pale wox³ I, and in vapors hid my face.
Art thou, too, near such doom? vague fear
there is:

For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.
Divine ye were created, and divine
In sad demeanor, solemn, undisturbed,
Unruffled, like high Gods, ye lived and ruled:
Now I behold in you fear, hope, and wrath;
Actions of rage and passion; even as
I see them, on the mortal world beneath,
In men who die.—This is the grief, O Son!
Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall!
Yet do thou strive; as thou art capable,
As thou canst move about, an evident God,
And canst oppose to each malignant hour
Ethereal presence:—I am but a voice;
My life is but the life of winds and tides,—
No more than winds and tides can I avail:—
But thou canst.—Be thou therefore in the
van

Of circumstance; yea, seize the arrow's barb
Before the tense string murmur.—To the
earth!

For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his woes.
Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright
sun,

And of thy seasons be a careful nurse."—
Ere half this region-whisper had come down
Hyperion arose, and on the stars
Lifted his curv'd lids, and kept them wide
Until it ceased; and still he kept them wide:
And still they were the same bright, patient
stars.

Then with a slow incline of his broad breast,
Like to a diver in the pearly seas,
Forward he stooped over the airy shore,
And plunged all noiseless into the deep night.

²Saturn.

³Grew.

¹The portals opened upon the domains.

SONNET¹

BRIGHT star! would I were steadfast as thou
art—

Not in lone splendor hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,²

¹Believed to have been written in March, 1819; published in 1848. This was formerly thought to have been the last poem written by Keats, as he wrote the later (and until recently the only known) version of the sonnet after he had embarked for Italy, in September, 1820. This he wrote on a blank page, facing *A Lover's Complaint*, in a folio volume of Shakespeare which he gave to Severn, who accompanied him on his journey.

The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human
shores,

Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the
moors—

No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillowed upon my fair love's ripening
breast,

To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

²Hermit.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY (1785-1859)

Leslie Stephen wrote, in a sentence which he later removed from his essay in *Hours in a Library*, "For seventy-three years De Quincey had been carrying on an operation which for want of a better term we must describe as living, but which would be more fitly described by some mode of speech indicating an existence on the borders of dreamland and reality." Doubtless this is an exaggeration, yet undeniably it expresses the impression De Quincey makes, and always will make, on many people. The publication a generation ago of a full-length biography made De Quincey's life credible, if it did not make his nature comprehensible, but no amount of information or analysis can gloss over the fact that De Quincey in the flesh was one of the strangest creatures the world has known. He was born in Manchester, where his father was a merchant, on 15 August, 1785. Of his father, who died when Thomas was still a child, he never saw anything, and of his mother, who showed no signs of really understanding him, one is tempted to say he saw too much. He was a frail child, and in his earliest days, as in his later ones, he lived the life of a solitary. In 1796 his mother moved to Bath and placed Thomas at school there. Later he was sent to Winkfield School, in Wiltshire. He showed astonishing precocity, and at fifteen was ready to enter Oxford. Instead, however, he was sent to Manchester Grammar School to mark time for three years, so that he might gain a scholarship at Brasenose College. He strongly rebelled against this waste of time; "I ask," he wrote to his mother, "whether a person can be happy, or even simply easy, who is in a situation which deprives him of *health, of society, of amusement, of liberty, of congeniality of pursuits*, and which, to complete the precious picture, admits of no *variety*." But his pleas were met with denial, so that in the end, in desperation, he ran away. His experiences he describes in his *Confessions*. In the spring of 1803 he was discovered by friends, brought home, and finally allowed to go to Oxford, where he entered Worcester College because of the smallness of his allowance. He came to be known in Oxford "as a strange being who associated with no one." He says himself: "For the first two years I compute that I did not utter one hundred words." It was at this time that he began the use of opium, though the first period of his great excesses did not come until his twenty-ninth year. At Oxford he extended his acquaintance with the Greek and Latin classics, studied Hebrew and German, and read widely in English literature. But he took no degree. Being displeased with the conduct of his examinations, in particular at not being allowed to answer questions in Greek, he simply disappeared, as he later did more than once on other occasions.

During several years after he left Oxford De Quincey led a rather wandering existence, becoming acquainted at one place or another with a number of literary people, among them Lamb, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Southey. Wordsworth he regarded with peculiar veneration, and in 1809 he settled at Grasmere in the Lake country in order to be near the Wordsworths. He did not, however, become really intimate with them, and in the course of time broke with them completely. It has been supposed that the break was at least partly caused by De Quincey's marriage in 1816 to Margaret Simpson, the daughter of a Westmoreland dalesman and a girl of social station inferior to Mrs. Wordsworth's. However unsuited to him De Quincey's wife was—and it is practically impossible to imagine any woman who would have made him a suitable wife—she at least may be said to have put him in the way of beginning his literary career. For soon after his marriage he found his money exhausted and he was compelled to turn from the reading of German literature and philosophy to writing for a living. It was in this way that he came to write, in 1821, the *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* for the *London Magazine*. The work immediately aroused wide and keen interest, and De Quincey thereafter always found periodicals open for all that he could write. About 1830 he removed to Edinburgh, and maintained a home there for his family throughout the remainder of his life. He often even lived with his family, though he kept separate lodgings for himself in Edinburgh, and kept rooms for some years also in Glasgow, and perhaps elsewhere, for he remained always likely to disappear suddenly for indefinite periods. The years of his worst opium-excesses were 1813, 1817, 1823, and 1844. After 1844, however, though he continued to drink laudanum until his death, he managed to keep the quantity within a moderate compass. During all these years he wrote voluminously for periodicals, though besides the *Confessions* he composed only two extended works, his romance, *Klosterheim* (1839), and his *Logic of Political Economy* (1844). Though we hear less of them in his later years, he frequently suffered from what he called "pecuniary embarrassments," not so much because his income was insufficient as because he was completely incapable of taking care of his money. He died in Edinburgh on 8 December, 1859. An acquaintance, J. R. Findlay,

thus described his appearance as an old man: "He was a very little man (about five feet, three or four inches); his countenance the most remarkable for its intellectual attractiveness that I have ever seen. His features, though not regular, were aristocratically fine, and an air of delicate breeding pervaded the face. His forehead was unusually high, square, and compact. At first sight his face appeared boyishly fresh and smooth, with a sort of hectic glow upon it that contrasted strangely with the evident appearances of age in the grizzled hair and dim-looking eyes. The flush or bloom on the cheeks was, I have no doubt, an effect of his constant use of opium; and the apparent smoothness of the face disappeared upon examination."

De Quincey was, like Coleridge and Lamb, widely read in the great English prose writers of the first half of the seventeenth century, and this is one secret of the richness and majesty of his style. His biographer, A. H. Japp, has indicated the qualities of his mind which we find united in the *Confessions*: "De Quincey himself, in descanting on the dream-faculty, says, 'Habitually to dream magnificently, a man must have a constitutional determination to reverie.' In that sentence he announces the true law of all literature that comes under the order of pure fantasy. But in his case, in spite of the strength of the dream-element, we cannot proceed far till we discover that his determination to reverie was but the extreme projection of one phase of a phenomenal nature balancing its opposite. . . . He was skilled in the exercises of the analytic understanding—a logician exacting and precise—else his dreaming had never gained for him the eminence it has gained. Surely it is calculated to strike the most casual reader on a perusal of . . . the *Confessions*, that his power of following up sensational effects and tracing with absolute exactness the most delicately varying shades of experience, and recording them with conscientious precision, were as noticeable as were the dreams to which they served to give effect."

CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER¹

I

I HAVE often been asked how I came to be a regular opium-eater; and have suffered, very unjustly, in the opinion of my acquaintance, from being reputed to have brought upon myself all the sufferings which I shall have to record, by a long course of indulgence in this practice purely for the sake of creating an artificial state of pleasurable excitement. This, however, is a misrepresentation of my case. True it is, that for nearly ten years I did occasionally take opium for the sake of the exquisite pleasure it gave me; but, so long as I took it with this view, I was effectually protected from all material bad consequences by the necessity of interposing long intervals between the several acts of indulgence, in order to renew the pleasurable sensations. It was not for the purpose of creating pleasure, but of mitigating pain in the severest degree, that I first began to use opium as an article of daily diet. In the twenty-eighth year of my age, a most painful affection of the stomach, which I had first

experienced about ten years before, attacked me in great strength. This affection had originally been caused by the extremities of hunger, suffered in my boyish days. During the season of hope and redundant happiness which succeeded (that is, from eighteen to twenty-four) it had slumbered: for the three following years it had revived at intervals; and now, under favorable circumstances, from depression of spirits, it attacked me with violence that yielded to no remedies but opium. As the youthful sufferings which first produced this derangement of the stomach were interesting in themselves and in the circumstances that attended them, I shall here briefly retrace them.

My father died when I was about seven years old, and left me to the care of four guardians. I was sent to various schools, great and small; and was very early distinguished for my classical attainments, especially for my knowledge of Greek. At thirteen I wrote Greek with ease; and at fifteen my command of that language was so great that I not only composed Greek verses in lyric meters, but could converse in Greek fluently, and without embarrassment—an accomplishment which I have not since met with in any scholar of my times, and which, in my case, was owing to the practice of daily reading off the newspapers into the best Greek I could furnish *extempore*; for the necessity of ransacking my memory and invention for all

¹The *Confessions* were first published as a book in 1822. In 1856 De Quincey published, as part of a collected edition of his works, a greatly enlarged version. The text used in these selections is that of 1822, which has been generally preferred by critics and which there is some reason for believing that De Quincey himself preferred. Words inside square brackets replace dashes in the original edition.

sorts and combinations of periphrastic expressions, as equivalents for modern ideas, images, relations of things, *etc.*, gave me a compass of diction which would never have been called out by a dull translation of moral essays, *etc.* "That boy," said one of my masters, pointing the attention of a stranger to me, "that boy could harangue an Athenian mob better than you or I could address an English one." He who honored me with this eulogy was a scholar, "and a ripe and good one,"¹ and, of all my tutors, was the only one whom I loved or revered. Unfortunately for me (and, as I afterwards learned, to this worthy man's great indignation), I was transferred to the care, first of a blockhead,² who was in a perpetual panic lest I should expose his ignorance; and, finally, to that of a respectable scholar,³ at the head of a great school on an ancient foundation. This man had been appointed to his situation by [Brasenose] College, Oxford; and was a sound, well-built scholar, but (like most men whom I have known from that college) coarse, clumsy, and inelegant. A miserable contrast he presented, in my eyes, to the Etonian brilliancy of my favorite master; and, besides, he could not disguise from my hourly notice the poverty and meagerness of his understanding. It is a bad thing for a boy to be, and know himself, far beyond his tutors, whether in knowledge or in power of mind. This was the case, so far as regarded knowledge at least, not with myself only; for the two boys who jointly with myself composed the first form were better Grecians than the head-master, though not more elegant scholars, nor at all more accustomed to sacrifice to the graces. When I first entered, I remember that we read Sophocles; and it was a constant matter of triumph to us, the learned triumvirate of the first form, to see our "Archididas-calus"⁴ (as he loved to be called) conning our lesson before we went up, and laying a regular train, with lexicon and grammar, for blowing up and blasting (as it were) any difficulties he found in the choruses; whilst *we* never condescended to open our

books until the moment of going up, and were generally employed in writing epigrams upon his wig, or some such important matter. My two class-fellows were poor, and dependent for their future prospects at the university on the recommendation of the head-master; but I, who had a small patrimonial property, the income of which was sufficient to support me at college, wished to be sent thither immediately. I made earnest representations on the subject to my guardians, but all to no purpose. One, who was more reasonable, and had more knowledge of the world than the rest, lived at a distance; two of the other three resigned all their authority into the hands of the fourth; and this fourth,⁵ with whom I had to negotiate, was a worthy man in his way, but haughty, obstinate, and intolerant of all opposition to his will. After a certain number of letters and personal interviews, I found that I had nothing to hope for, not even a compromise of the matter, from my guardian: unconditional submission was what he demanded; and I prepared myself, therefore, for other measures. Summer was now coming on with hasty steps, and my seventeenth birthday was fast approaching; after which day I had sworn within myself that I would no longer be numbered amongst schoolboys. Money being what I chiefly wanted, I wrote to a woman of high rank,⁶ who, though young herself, had known me from a child, and had latterly treated me with great distinction, requesting that she would "lend" me five guineas.⁷ For upwards of a week no answer came; and I was beginning to despond, when, at length, a servant put into my hands a double letter, with a coronet on the seal. The letter was kind and obliging; the fair writer was on the sea-coast, and in that way the delay had arisen; she enclosed double of what I had asked, and good-naturedly hinted that if I should *never* repay her it would not absolutely ruin her. Now, then, I was prepared for my scheme: ten guineas, added to about two that I had remaining from my pocket money, seemed to me sufficient for

¹Cf. *Henry VIII*, IV, ii, 51-52. The master was a Mr. Morgan, of Bath Grammar School.

²Mr. Spencer, of Winkfield School.

³Mr. Lawson, of Manchester Grammar School.

⁴Head-master (Greek).

⁵The Rev. Samuel Hall, at one time De Quincey's tutor.

⁶Lady Carbery, a young friend of Mrs. De Quincey's, about ten years older than De Quincey.

⁷About \$25.

an indefinite length of time; and at that happy age, if no *definite* boundary can be assigned to one's power, the spirit of hope and pleasure makes it virtually infinite.

It is a just remark of Dr. Johnson's¹ (and, what cannot often be said of his remarks, it is a very feeling one) that we never do anything consciously for the last time (of things, that is, which we have long been in the habit of doing), without sadness of heart. This truth I felt deeply when I came to leave [Manchester], a place which I did not love, and where I had not been happy. On the evening before I left [Manchester] for ever, I grieved when the ancient and lofty school-room resounded with the evening service, performed for the last time in my hearing; and at night, when the muster-roll of names was called over, and mine (as usual) was called first, I stepped forward and, passing the head-master, who was standing by, I bowed to him, and looked earnestly in his face, thinking to myself, "He is old and infirm, and in this world I shall not see him again." I was right; I never *did* see him again, nor ever shall. He looked at me complacently, smiled good-naturedly, returned my salutation (or rather my valediction), and we parted (though he knew it not) for ever. I could not reverence him intellectually; but he had been uniformly kind to me, and had allowed me many indulgences; and I grieved at the thought of the mortification I should inflict upon him.

The morning came, which was to launch me into the world, and from which my whole succeeding life has, in many important points, taken its coloring. I lodged in the head-master's house, and had been allowed, from my first entrance, the indulgence of a private room, which I used both as a sleeping room and as a study. At half after three I rose, and gazed with deep emotion at the ancient towers of [the Collegiate Church], "dressed in earliest light," and beginning to crimson with the radiant luster of a cloudless July morning. I was firm and immovable in my purpose, but yet agitated by anticipation of uncertain danger and troubles; and if I could have foreseen the hurricane and perfect hail-storm of affliction which soon fell upon me, well might I have been

agitated. To this agitation the deep peace of the morning presented an affecting contrast, and in some degree a medicine. The silence was more profound than that of midnight: and to me the silence of a summer morning is more touching than all other silence, because, the light being broad and strong, as that of noon-day at other seasons of the year, it seems to differ from perfect day chiefly because man is not yet abroad, and thus the peace of nature, and of the innocent creatures of God, seems to be secure and deep, only so long as the presence of man, and his restless and unquiet spirit, are not there to trouble its sanctity. I dressed myself, took my hat and gloves, and lingered a little in the room. For the last year and a half this room has been my "pensive citadel":² here I had read and studied through all the hours of night, and, though true it was that for the latter part of this time I, who was framed for love and gentle affections, had lost my gayety and happiness, during the strife and fever of contention with my guardian, yet, on the other hand, as a boy so passionately fond of books, and dedicated to intellectual pursuits, I could not fail to have enjoyed many happy hours in the midst of general dejection. I wept as I looked round on the chair, hearth, writing-table, and other familiar objects, knowing too certainly that I looked upon them for the last time. Whilst I write this, it is eighteen years ago; and yet, at this moment, I see distinctly, as if it were but yesterday, the lineaments and expressions of the object on which I fixed my parting gaze; it was a picture of the lovely—³ which hung over the mantel-piece, the eyes and mouth of which were so beautiful, and the whole countenance so radiant with benignity and divine tranquillity, that I had a thousand times laid down my pen, or my book, to gather consolation from it, as a devotee from his patron saint. Whilst I was yet gazing upon it, the deep tones of [the Collegiate Church] clock proclaimed that it was four o'clock. I went up to the picture, kissed it, and then gently walked out, and closed the door for ever!

* * * * *

²From Wordsworth's sonnet, *Nuns Fret not at their Convent's Narrow Room*, l. 3.

³It was really a portrait of an unknown lady, according to a tradition in the school a copy from Vandyke.

¹In the *Idler*, No. 103, with which the periodical ended.

So blended and intertwined in this life are occasions of laughter and of tears that I cannot yet recall, without smiling, an incident which occurred at that time, and which had nearly put a stop to the immediate execution of my plan. I had a trunk of immense weight; for, besides my clothes, it contained nearly all my library. The difficulty was to get this removed to a carrier's: my room was at an aerial elevation in the house, and (what was worse) the staircase which communicated with this angle of the building was accessible only by a gallery, which passed the head-master's chamber-door. I was a favorite with all the servants; and knowing that any of them would screen me, and act confidentially, I communicated my embarrassment to a groom of the head-master's. The groom swore he would do anything I wished; and, when the time arrived, went upstairs to bring the trunk down. This I feared was beyond the strength of any one man: however, the groom was a man

Of Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear
The weight of mightiest monarchies;¹

and had a back as spacious as Salisbury Plain.² Accordingly he persisted in bringing down the trunk alone, whilst I stood waiting at the foot of the last flight, in anxiety for the event. For some time I heard him descending with slow and firm steps; but, unfortunately, from his trepidation, as he drew near the dangerous quarter, within a few steps of the gallery, his foot slipped; and the mighty burden, falling from his shoulders, gained such increase of impetus at each step of the descent, that, on reaching the bottom, it trundled, or rather leaped, right across, with the noise of twenty devils, against the very bedroom door of the archididascalus. My first thought was, that all was lost; and that my only chance for executing a retreat was to sacrifice my baggage. However, on reflection, I determined to abide the issue. The groom was in the utmost alarm, both on his own account and on mine: but, in spite of this, so irresistibly had the sense of the ludicrous, in this unhappy *contretemps*,³ taken

possession of his fancy, that he sang out a long, loud, and canorous⁴ peal of laughter, that might have wakened the Seven Sleepers.⁵ At the sound of this resonant merriment, within the very ears of insulted authority, I could not forbear joining in it; subdued to this, not so much by the unhappy *étourderie*⁶ of the trunk, as by the effect it had upon the groom. We both expected, as a matter of course, that Dr. [Lawson]⁷ would sally out of his room; for, in general, if but a mouse stirred, he sprang out like a mastiff from his kennel. Strange to say, however, on this occasion, when the noise of laughter had ceased, no sound, or rustling even, was to be heard in the bedroom. Dr. [Lawson] had a painful complaint which, sometimes keeping him awake, made his sleep, perhaps, when it did come, the deeper. Gathering courage from the silence, the groom hoisted his burden again, and accomplished the remainder of his descent without accident. I waited until I saw the trunk placed on a wheelbarrow, and on its road to the carrier's: then, "with Providence my guide,"⁸ I set off on foot, carrying a small parcel, with some articles of dress, under my arm: a favorite English poet in one pocket; and a small 12mo. volume, containing about nine plays of Euripides, in the other.

It had been my intention, originally, to proceed to Westmoreland, both from the love I bore to that county, and on other personal accounts.⁹ Accident, however, gave a different direction to my wanderings, and I bent my steps towards North Wales.¹⁰

⁴ Ringing.

⁵ Christian youths of Ephesus who, according to legend, hid themselves in a cave during the persecution under Decius (A. D. 249-251) and slept there for several hundred years.

⁶ Heedless trick.

⁷ De Quincey explained in the edition of 1856 that he had created him a doctor in order "to evade too close an approach to the realities of the case, and consequently to personalities" which might have displeased others.

⁸ Cf. the last four lines of *Paradise Lost*.

⁹ He wished to see Wordsworth.

¹⁰ De Quincey actually went first to Chester, where he saw some members of his family, and then journeyed into Wales.

¹ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II, 306-7.

² In Wiltshire.

³ Accident.

II

Soon after this,¹ I contrived, by means which I must omit for want of room,² to transfer myself to London. And now began the latter and fiercer stage of my long sufferings; without using a disproportionate expression, I might say, of my agony. For I now suffered, for upwards of sixteen weeks, the physical anguish of hunger in various degrees of intensity; but as bitter, perhaps, as ever any human being can have suffered who has survived it. I would not needlessly harass my reader's feelings by a detail of all that I endured; for extremities such as these, under any circumstances of heaviest misconduct or guilt, cannot be contemplated, even in description, without a rueful pity that is painful to the natural goodness of the human heart. Let it suffice, at least on this occasion, to say that a few fragments of bread from the breakfast-table of one individual³ (who supposed me to be ill, but did not know of my being in utter want), and these at uncertain intervals, constituted my whole support. During the former part of my sufferings (that is, generally in Wales, and always for the first two months in London), I was houseless, and very seldom slept under a roof. To this constant exposure to the open air I ascribe it mainly that I did not sink under my torments. Latterly, however, when cold and more inclement weather came on, and when, from the length of my sufferings, I had begun to sink into a more languishing condition, it was, no doubt, fortunate for me, that the same person to whose breakfast-table I had access allowed me to sleep in a large, unoccupied house, of which he was tenant. Unoccupied, I call it, for there was no household or establishment in it; nor any furniture, indeed, except a table and a few chairs. But I found, on taking possession of my new quarters, that

the house already contained one single inmate, a poor, friendless child, apparently ten years old; but she seemed hunger-bitten; and sufferings of that sort often make children look older than they are. From this forlorn child I learned that she had slept and lived there alone for some time before I came; and great joy the poor creature expressed, when she found that I was in future to be her companion through the hours of darkness. The house was large; and, from the want of furniture, the noise of the rats made a prodigious echoing on the spacious staircase and hall; and, amidst the real fleshly ills of cold, and, I fear, hunger, the forsaken child had found leisure to suffer still more (it appeared) from the self-created one of ghosts. I promised her protection against all ghosts whatsoever; but, alas! I could offer her no other assistance. We lay upon the floor, with a bundle of cursed law papers for a pillow, but with no other covering than a sort of large horseman's cloak; afterwards, however, we discovered, in a garret, an old sofa-cover, a small piece of rug, and some fragments of other articles, which added a little to our warmth. The poor child crept close to me for warmth, and for security against her ghostly enemies. When I was not more than usually ill, I took her into my arms, so that, in general, she was tolerably warm, and often slept when I could not; for, during the last two months of my sufferings, I slept much in the daytime, and was apt to fall into transient dozings at all hours. But my sleep distressed me more than my watching; for, besides the tumultuousness of my dreams (which were only not so awful as those which I shall have to describe hereafter as produced by opium), my sleep was never more than what is called *dog-sleep*; so that I could hear myself moaning, and was often, as it seemed to me, awakened suddenly by my own voice; and, about this time, a hideous sensation began to haunt me as soon as I fell into a slumber, which has since returned upon me, at different periods of my life, namely, a sort of twitching (I know not where, but apparently about the region of the stomach), which compelled me violently to throw out my feet for the sake of relieving it. This sensation coming on as soon as I began to sleep, and the effort to relieve it constantly awaking me,

¹After a period of some days spent in Wales.

²He borrowed twelve guineas (about \$60) from two lawyers whom he encountered in the Snowdon district.

³This was a Mr. Brunell, or Brown, to whom De Quincey had been referred by a money-lender named Dell. As De Quincey explains in a later passage of the *Confessions*, "he was one of those anomalous practitioners in lower departments of the law, who—what shall I say?—who, on prudential reasons, or from necessity, deny themselves all indulgence in the luxury of too delicate a conscience."

at length I slept only from exhaustion; and, from increasing weakness (as I said before), I was constantly falling asleep, and constantly awaking. Meantime, the master of the house sometimes came in upon us suddenly, and very early; sometimes not till ten o'clock; sometimes not at all. He was in constant fear of bailiffs; improving on the plan of Cromwell, every night he slept in a different quarter of London;¹ and I observed that he never failed to examine, through a private window, the appearance of those who knocked at the door, before he would allow it to be opened. He breakfasted alone; indeed, his tea equipage would hardly have admitted of his hazarding an invitation to a second person, any more than the quantity of esculent *matériel*,² which, for the most part, was little more than a roll, or a few biscuits, which he had bought on his road from the place where he had slept. Or, if he *had* asked a party, as I once learnedly and facetiously observed to him, the several members of it must have *stood* in the relation to each other (not *sat* in any relation whatever) of succession, as the metaphysicians have it, and not of coexistence; in the relation of parts of time, and not of the parts of space. During his breakfast, I generally contrived a reason for lounging in; and, with an air of as much indifference as I could assume, took up such fragments as he had left,—sometimes, indeed, there were none at all. In doing this, I committed no robbery except upon the man himself, who was thus obliged (I believe), now and then, to send out at noon for an extra biscuit; for, as to the poor child, *she* was never admitted into his study (if I may give that name to his chief depository of parchments, law writings, *etc.*); that room was to her the Blue-beard room of the house, being regularly locked on his departure to dinner, about six o'clock, which usually was his final departure for the night. Whether this child was an illegitimate daughter of Mr. [Brunell], or only a servant, I could not ascertain; she did

not herself know; but certainly she was treated altogether as a menial servant. No sooner did Mr. [Brunell] make his appearance, than she went below stairs, brushed his shoes, coat, *etc.*; and, except when she was summoned to run an errand, she never emerged from the dismal Tartarus of the kitchens, *etc.*, to the upper air, until my welcome knock at night called up her little trembling footsteps to the front door. Of her life during the daytime, however, I knew little but what I gathered from her own account at night; for, as soon as the hours of business commenced, I saw that my absence would be acceptable; and, in general, therefore, I went off and sat in the parks, or elsewhere, until night-fall.

III

Whether desperate or not, however, the issue of the struggle in 1813 was what I have mentioned;³ and from this date the reader is to consider me as a regular and confirmed opium-eater, of whom to ask whether on any particular day he had or had not taken opium, would be to ask whether his lungs had performed respiration, or the heart fulfilled its functions. You understand now, reader, what I am; and you are by this time aware, that no old gentleman, "with a snow-white beard," will have any chance of persuading me to surrender "the little golden receptacle of the pernicious drug."⁴ No; I give notice to all, whether moralists or surgeons, that whatever be their pretensions and skill in their respective lines of practice, they must not hope for any countenance from me, if they think to begin by any savage proposition for a Lent or Ramadan⁵ of abstinence

³The section from which this passage is taken is preceded by one entitled "The Pleasures of Opium." In it De Quincey tells how he began taking opium when he was at Oxford—though he made his first purchase of it from a druggist in London—in 1804. He then goes on to state that he had continued to take a small quantity once a week until 1813, but that in this year he had suffered from "a most appalling irritation of the stomach" from which he had been able to find no relief except in daily doses of opium, and that his subsequent efforts to break off the habit had been unavailing.

⁴A reference to a preceding note in which De Quincey warns his readers not to believe statements about the harmful effects of opium made by Thomas Hope in a novel entitled *Anastasius* (published in 1819).

⁵Ninth month of the Mahometan year, each day of which is observed as a fast from dawn until sunset.

¹De Quincey had perhaps read in Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*, Bk. XV, the story that Cromwell became apprehensive of danger after the dissolution of his last Parliament, and "rarely lodged two nights together in one chamber, but had many furnished and prepared, to which his own key conveyed him."

²Edible substance.

from opium. This, then, being all fully understood between us, we shall in future sail before the wind. Now, then, reader, from 1813, where all this time we have been sitting down and loitering, rise up, if you please, and walk forward about three years more. Now draw up the curtain, and you shall see me in a new character.

If any man, poor or rich, were to say that he would tell us what had been the happiest day in his life, and the why and the wherefore, I suppose that we should all cry out, Hear him! hear him! As to the happiest day, that must be very difficult for any wise man to name; because any event, that could occupy so distinguished a place in a man's retrospect of his life, or be entitled to have shed a special felicity on any one day, ought to be of such an enduring character as that (accidents apart) it should have continued to shed the same felicity, or one not distinguishably less, on many years together. To the happiest *lustrum*,¹ however, or even to the happiest year, it may be allowed to any man to point without discountenance from wisdom. This year, in my case, reader, was the one which we have now reached; though it stood, I confess, as a parenthesis between years of a gloomier character. It was a year of brilliant water (to speak after the manner of jewelers), set, as it were, and insulated, in the gloom and cloudy melancholy of opium. Strange as it may sound, I had a little before this time descended suddenly, and without any considerable effort, from three hundred and twenty grains of opium (that is, eight² thousand drops of laudanum) per day, to forty grains, or one-

¹Period of five years.

²I here reckon twenty-five drops of laudanum as equivalent to one grain of opium, which, I believe, is the common estimate. However, as both may be considered variable quantities (the crude opium varying much in strength, and the tincture still more), I suppose that no infinitesimal accuracy can be had in such a calculation. Tea-spoons vary as much in size as opium in strength. Small ones hold about one hundred drops: so that eight thousand drops are about eighty times a tea-spoonful. The reader sees how much I kept within Doctor Buchan's indulgent allowance. (De Quincey's note. The allusion is to a pirated edition of Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* which De Quincey had seen, in which "the Doctor was made to say—'Be particularly careful never to take above 25 ounces of laudanum at once'; the true reading being probably 25 drops, which are held equal to about one grain of crude opium.")

eighth part. Instantaneously, and as if by magic, the cloud of profoundest melancholy which rested upon my brain, like some black vapors that I have seen roll away from the summits of mountains, drew off in one day (*νυχθημερον*³); passed off with its murky banners as simultaneously as a ship that has been stranded, and is floated off by a spring tide,—

That moveth altogether, if it move at all.⁴

Now, then, I was again happy: I now took only one thousand drops of laudanum per day—and what was that? A latter spring had come to close up the season of youth: my brain performed its functions as healthily as ever before. I read Kant⁵ again, and again I understood him, or fancied that I did. Again my feelings of pleasure expanded themselves to all around me; and if any man from Oxford or Cambridge, or from neither, had been announced to me in my unpretending cottage, I should have welcomed him with as sumptuous a reception as so poor a man could offer. Whatever else was wanting to a wise man's happiness, of laudanum I would have given him as much as he wished, and in a golden cup. And, by the way, now that I speak of giving laudanum away, I remember, about this time, a little incident, which I mention, because, trifling as it was, the reader will soon meet it again in my dreams, which it influenced more fearfully than could be imagined. One day a Malay knocked at my door. What business a Malay could have to transact amongst English mountains, I cannot conjecture; but possibly he was on his road to a seaport about forty miles distant.

The servant who opened the door to him was a young girl⁶ born and bred amongst the mountains, who had never seen an Asiatic dress of any sort: his turban, therefore, confounded her not a little; and as it turned out that his attainments in English were exactly of the same extent as hers in the Malay, there seemed to be an impassable gulf fixed between all communication of ideas, if either

³A night and a day.

⁴Wordsworth's *Resolution and Independence*.

⁵Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), the difficulty of whose writings has become proverbial.

⁶She was Barbara Lewthwaite, named in Wordsworth's *The Pet Lamb*.

party had happened to possess any. In this dilemma, the girl, recollecting the reputed learning of her master (and, doubtless, giving me credit for a knowledge of all the languages of the earth, besides, perhaps, a few of the lunar ones), came and gave me to understand that there was a sort of demon below, whom she clearly imagined that my art could exorcise from the house. I did not immediately go down; but when I did, the group which presented itself, arranged as it was by accident, though not very elaborate, took hold of my fancy and my eye in a way that none of the statuesque attitudes exhibited in the ballets at the opera-house, though so ostentatiously complex, had ever done. In a cottage kitchen, but paneled on the wall with dark wood that from age and rubbing resembled oak, and looking more like a rustic hall of entrance than a kitchen, stood the Malay, his turban and loose trousers of dingy white relieved upon the dark paneling; he had placed himself nearer to the girl than she seemed to relish, though her native spirit of mountain intrepidity contended with the feeling of simple awe which her countenance expressed, as she gazed upon the tiger-cat before her. And a more striking picture there could not be imagined than the beautiful English face of the girl, and its exquisite fairness, together with the sallow and bilious skin of the Malay, enameled or veneered with mahogany by marine air, his small, fierce, restless eyes, thin lips, slavish gestures, and adorations. Half hidden by the ferocious-looking Malay was a little child from a neighboring cottage, who had crept in after him, and was now in the act of reverting its head and gazing upwards at the turban and the fiery eyes beneath it, whilst with one hand he caught at the dress of the young woman for protection.

My knowledge of the oriental tongues is not remarkably extensive, being, indeed, confined to two words,—the Arabic word for barley, and the Turkish for opium (madjoon), which I have learned from *Anastasius*. And, as I had neither a Malay dictionary, nor even Adelung's *Mithridates*,¹ which might have helped me to a few words, I addressed

him in some lines from the *Iliad*, considering that, of such languages as I possessed, the Greek, in point of longitude, came geographically nearest to an oriental one. He worshiped me in a devout manner, and replied in what I suppose was Malay. In this way I saved my reputation with my neighbors, for the Malay had no means of betraying the secret. He lay down upon the floor for about an hour, and then pursued his journey. On his departure, I presented him with a piece of opium. To him, as an orientalist, I concluded that opium must be familiar; and the expression of his face convinced me that it was. Nevertheless, I was struck with some little consternation when I saw him suddenly raise his hand to his mouth, and (in the school-boy phrase) bolt the whole, divided into three pieces, at one mouthful. The quantity was enough to kill three dragoons and their horses, and I felt some alarm for the poor creature; but what could be done? I had given him the opium in compassion for his solitary life, on recollecting that, if he had traveled on foot from London, it must be nearly three weeks since he could have exchanged a thought with any human being. I could not think of violating the laws of hospitality by having him seized and drenched with an emetic, and thus frightening him into a notion that we were going to sacrifice him to some English idol. No; there was clearly no help for it. He took his leave, and for some days I felt anxious; but, as I never heard of any Malay being found dead, I became convinced that he was used² to opium, and that I must have done him the service I designed, by giving him one night of respite from the pains of wandering.

This incident I have digressed to mention,

¹This, however, is not a necessary conclusion; the varieties of effect produced by opium on different constitutions are infinite. A London magistrate (Harriott's *Struggles through Life*, vol. iii, p. 391, third edition) has recorded that on the first occasion of his trying laudanum for the gout, he took *forty* drops; the next night *sixty*, and on the fifth night *eighty*, without any effect whatever; and this at an advanced age. I have an anecdote from a country surgeon, however, which sinks Mr. Harriott's case into a trifle; and, in my projected medical treatise on opium, which I will publish, provided the College of Surgeons will pay me for enlightening their benighted understandings upon this subject, I will relate it; but it is far too good a story to be published gratis (De Quincey's note).

²A work on oriental languages named from the king of Pontus who, according to tradition, could speak the 22 dialects of his kingdom. The author was J. C. Adelung (1732–1806), a German philologist.

because this Malay (partly from the picturesque exhibition he assisted to frame, partly from the anxiety I connected with his image for some days) fastened afterwards upon my dreams, and brought other Malays with him worse than himself, that ran "a-muck"¹ at me, and led me into a world of troubles.—But to quit this episode, and to return to my intercalary² year of happiness. I have said already, that on a subject so important to us all as happiness, we should listen with pleasure to any man's experience or experiments, even though he were but a ploughboy, who cannot be supposed to have ploughed very deep in such an intractable soil as that of human pains and pleasures, or to have conducted his researches upon any very enlightened principles. But I, who have taken happiness, both in a solid and a liquid shape, both boiled and unboiled, both East India and Turkey—who have conducted my experiments upon this interesting subject with a sort of galvanic battery—and have, for the general benefit of the world, inoculated myself, as it were, with the poison of eight thousand drops of laudanum per day (just for the same reason as a French surgeon inoculated himself lately with a cancer—an English one, twenty years ago, with plague—and a third, I know not of what nation³ with hydrophobia) I, it will be admitted, must surely know what happiness is, if anybody does. And therefore I will here lay down an analysis of happiness; and, as the most interesting mode of communicating it, I will give it, not didactically, but wrapped up and involved in a picture of one evening, as I spent every evening during the intercalary year when laudanum, though taken daily, was to me no more than the elixir of pleasure. This done, I shall quit the subject of happiness altogether, and pass to a very different one—the *pains of opium*.

Let there be a cottage, standing in a valley, eighteen miles from any town;⁴ no

spacious valley, but about two miles long by three-quarters of a mile in average width—the benefit of which provision is, that all the families resident within its circuit will compose, as it were, one larger household, personally familiar to your eye, and more or less interesting to your affections. Let the mountains be real mountains, between three and four thousand feet high, and the cottage a real cottage, not (as a witty author has it) "a cottage with a double coach-house";⁵ let it be, in fact (for I must abide by the actual scene), a white cottage, embowered with flowering shrubs, so chosen as to unfold a succession of flowers upon the walls, and clustering around the windows, through all the months of spring, summer, and autumn—beginning, in fact, with May roses, and ending with jasmine. Let it, however, *not* be spring, nor summer, nor autumn—but winter, in its sternest shape. This is a most important point in the science of happiness. And I am surprised to see people overlook it, and think it matter of congratulation that winter is going, or, if coming, is not likely to be a severe one. On the contrary, I put up a petition annually for as much snow, hail, frost, or storm of one kind or other as the skies can possibly afford us. Surely every-

in those days, of Grasmere; and the cottage was occupied for more than twenty years by myself, as immediate successor, in the year 1809, to Wordsworth. Looking to the limitation here laid down—*viz.*, *in those days*—the reader will inquire in what way *Time* can have affected the beauty of Grasmere. Do the Westmoreland valleys turn gray-headed? O reader! this is a painful memento for some of us! Thirty years ago, a gang of Vandals (nameless, I thank heaven, to me), for the sake of building a mail-coach road that never would be wanted, carried, at a cost of £3000 to the defrauded parish, a horrid causeway of sheer granite masonry, for three-quarters of a mile, right through the loveliest succession of secret forest dells and sly recesses of the lake, margined by unrivalled ferns, amongst which was the *Osmunda regalis*. This sequestered angle of Grasmere is described by Wordsworth, as it unveiled itself on a September morning, in the exquisite poems on the "Naming of Places." From this also—*viz.*, this spot of ground, and this magnificent crest (the *Osmunda*)—was suggested that unique line, the finest independent line through all the records of verse,

"Or lady of the lake,

Sole-sitting by the shores of old romance."

Rightly, therefore, did I introduce this limitation. The Grasmere before and after this outrage were two different vales. (De Quincey's note in the edition of 1856. The poem quoted from is IV in the *Poems on the Naming of Places*.)

⁵Coleridge, in *The Devil's Thoughts*.

¹See the common accounts, in any Eastern traveler or voyager, of the frantic excesses committed by Malays who have taken opium, or are reduced to desperation by ill luck at gambling (De Quincey's note).

²Interpolated.

³He also was English—a surgeon of Brighton—as De Quincey states in the edition of 1856.

⁴The cottage and the valley concerned in this description were not imaginary: the valley was the lovely one,

body is aware of the divine pleasures which attend a winter fireside—candles at four o'clock, warm hearth-rugs, tea, a fair tea-maker, shutters closed, curtains flowing in ample draperies on the floor, whilst the wind and rain are raging audibly without,

And at the doors and windows seem to call
As heaven and earth they would together mell;
Yet the least entrance find they none at all;
Whence sweeter grows our rest secure in massy
hall.

*Castle of Indolence.*¹

All these are items in the description of a winter evening which must surely be familiar to everybody born in a high latitude. And it is evident that most of these delicacies, like ice-cream, require a very low temperature of the atmosphere to produce them: they are fruits which cannot be ripened without weather stormy or inclement, in some way or other. I am not "*particular*," as people say, whether it be snow, or black frost, or wind so strong that (as Mr. [Anti-Slavery Clarkson] says) "you may lean your back against it like a post." I can put up even with rain, provided that it rains cats and dogs; but something of the sort I must have; and, if I have not, I think myself in a manner ill used: for why am I called on to pay so heavily for winter, in coals, and candles, and various privations that will occur even to gentlemen, if I am not to have the article good of its kind? No: a Canadian winter for my money, or a Russian one, where every man is but a co-proprietor with the north wind in the fee-simple² of his own ears. Indeed, so great an epicure am I in this matter, that I cannot relish a winter night fully, if it be much past St. Thomas's day,³ and have degenerated into disgusting tendencies to vernal appearances;—no, it must be divided by a thick wall of dark nights from all return of light and sunshine. From the latter weeks of October to Christmas-eve, therefore, is the period during which happiness is in season, which, in my judgment, enters the room with the tea-tray; for tea, though ridiculed by those who are naturally of coarse nerves, or are become so from wine-drinking,

and are not susceptible of influence from so refined a stimulant, will always be the favorite beverage of the intellectual; and, for my part, I would have joined Dr. Johnson in a *bellum intermedium* against Jonas Hanway, or any other impious person who should presume to disparage it. But here, to save myself the trouble of too much verbal description, I will introduce a painter, and give him directions for the rest of the picture. Painters do not like white cottages, unless a good deal weather-stained, but, as the reader now understands that it is a winter night, his services will not be required except for the inside of the house.

Paint me, then, a room seventeen feet by twelve, and not more than seven and a half feet high. This, reader, is somewhat ambitiously styled, in my family, the drawing-room; but being contrived "a double debt to pay,"⁴ it is also, and more justly, termed the library, for it happens that books are the only article of property in which I am richer than my neighbors. Of these I have about five thousand, collected gradually since my eighteenth year. Therefore, painter, put as many as you can into this room. Make it populous with books; and, furthermore, paint me a good fire, and furniture plain and modest, befitting the unpretending cottage of a scholar. And near the fire paint me a tea-table; and (as it is clear that no creature can come to see one, such a stormy night) place only two cups and saucers on the tea-tray; and, if you know how to paint such a thing symbolically, or otherwise, paint me an eternal tea-pot—eternal *à parte ante* and *à parte post*;⁵ for I usually drink tea from eight o'clock at night to four in the morning. And, as it is very unpleasant to make tea, or to pour it out for one's self, paint me a lovely young woman, sitting at the table. Paint her arms like Aurora's, and her smiles like Hebe's;—but no, dear M[argaret],⁶ not even in jest let me

¹By Thomson. Canto I, stanza 43, quoted inexactly.

²*I.e.*, absolute ownership.

³21 December.

⁴War to the death. Hanway, said to have been "the first man who ventured to walk the streets of London with an umbrella over his head," wrote an *Essay on Tea* (1756) which Dr. Johnson attacked in a review. Hanway angrily replied, and Dr. Johnson persisted in his defense of tea in a reply to the reply.

⁵Goldsmith, *The Deserted Village*, l. 229.

⁶From the times before and from the times to come.

⁷De Quincey's wife.

insinuate that thy power to illuminate my cottage rests upon a tenure so perishable as mere personal beauty; or that the witchcraft of angelic smiles lies within the empire of any earthly pencil. Pass, then, my good painter, to something more within its power; and the next article brought forward should naturally be myself—a picture of the Opium-eater, with his “little golden receptacle of the pernicious drug” lying beside him on the table. As to the opium, I have no objection to see a picture of *that*, though I would rather see the original; you may paint it, if you choose; but I apprise you that no “little” receptacle would, even in 1816, answer *my* purpose, who was at a distance from the “stately Pantheon,”¹ and all druggists (mortal or otherwise). No: you may as well paint the real receptacle, which was not of gold, but of glass, and as much like a wine-decanter as possible. Into this you may put a quart of ruby-colored laudanum; that, and a book of German metaphysics placed by its side, will sufficiently attest my being in the neighborhood; but as to myself, there I demur. I admit that, naturally, I ought to occupy the foreground of the picture; that being the hero of the piece, or (if you choose) the criminal at the bar, my body should be had into court. This seems reasonable; but why should I confess, on this point, to a painter? or why confess at all? If the public (into whose private ear I am confidentially whispering my confessions, and not into any painter’s) should chance to have framed some agreeable picture for itself of the Opium-eater’s exterior—should have ascribed to him, romantically, an elegant person, or a handsome face, why should I barbarously tear from it so pleasing a delusion—pleasing both to the public and to me? No: paint me, if at all, according to your own fancy; and, as a painter’s fancy should teem with beautiful creations, I cannot fail, in that way, to be a gainer. And now, reader, we have run through all the ten categories of my condition, as it stood about 1816–1817, up to the middle of which latter year I judge myself to have been a happy man; and the elements of that happiness I have endeav-

ored to place before you, in the above sketch of the interior of a scholar’s library, in a cottage among the mountains, on a stormy winter evening.

But now farewell, a long farewell, to happiness, winter or summer! farewell to smiles and laughter! farewell to peace of mind! farewell to hope and to tranquil dreams, and to the blessed consolations of sleep! For more than three years and a half I am summoned away from these, I am now arrived at an *Iliad* of woes:² for I have now to record

THE PAINS OF OPIUM.

IV

I now pass³ to what is the main subject of these latter confessions, to the history and journal of what took place in my dreams; for these were the immediate and proximate cause of my acutest suffering.

The first notice I had of any important change going on in this part of my physical economy, was from the reawakening of a state of eye generally incident to childhood, or exalted states of irritability. I know not whether my reader is aware that many children, perhaps most, have a power of painting, as it were, upon the darkness, all sorts of phantoms: in some that power is simply a mechanic affection of the eye; others have a voluntary or a semi-voluntary power to dismiss or to summon them; or, as a child once said to me when I questioned him on this matter, “I can tell them to go, and they go; but sometimes they come when I don’t tell them to come.” Whereupon I told him that he had almost as unlimited a command over apparitions as a Roman centurion over his soldiers.—In the middle of 1817, I think it was, that this faculty became positively distressing to me: at night, when I lay awake in bed, vast processions passed along in mournful pomp; friezes of never-ending stories, that to my feelings were as sad and solemn as if they were stories drawn from times before *Œdipus* or *Priam*, before *Tyre*, before *Memphis*. And, at the same time, a corresponding change took place in my dreams; a theater seemed suddenly opened

¹A London concert hall, called stately by Wordsworth, near which was the druggist’s shop in which De Quincey first purchased opium in 1804.

²The allusion is to the opening lines of the *Iliad*.

³After statements showing the intellectual torpor to which the excessive use of opium reduced him.

and lighted up within my brain, which presented, nightly, spectacles of more than earthly splendor. And the four following facts may be mentioned, as noticeable at this time:

1. That, as the creative state of the eye increased, a sympathy seemed to arise between the waking and the dreaming states of the brain in one point—that whatsoever I happened to call up and to trace by a voluntary act upon the darkness was very apt to transfer itself to my dreams; so that I feared to exercise this faculty; for, as Midas turned all things to gold, that yet baffled his hopes and defrauded his human desires, so whatsoever things capable of being visually represented I did but think of in the darkness, immediately shaped themselves into phantoms of the eye; and, by a process apparently no less inevitable, when thus once traced in faint and visionary colors, like writings in sympathetic ink, they were drawn out, by the fierce chemistry of my dreams, into insufferable splendor that fretted my heart.

2. For this, and all other changes in my dreams, were accompanied by deep-seated anxiety and gloomy melancholy, such as are wholly incommunicable by words. I seemed every night to descend—not metaphorically, but literally to descend—into chasms and sunless abysses, depths below depths, from which it seemed hopeless that I could ever reascend. Nor did I, by waking, feel that I *had* reascended. This I do not dwell upon; because the state of gloom which attended these gorgeous spectacles, amounting at least to utter darkness, as of some suicidal despondency, cannot be approached by words.

3. The sense of space, and in the end the sense of time, were both powerfully affected. Buildings, landscapes, *etc.*, were exhibited in proportions so vast as the bodily eye is not fitted to receive. Space swelled, and was amplified to an extent of unutterable infinity. This, however, did not disturb me so much as the vast expansion of time. I sometimes seemed to have lived for seventy or one hundred years in one night; nay, sometimes had feelings representative of a millennium, passed in that time, or, however, of a duration far beyond the limits of any human experience.

4. The minutest incidents of childhood,

or forgotten scenes of later years, were often revived. I could not be said to recollect them; for if I had been told of them when waking, I should not have been able to acknowledge them as parts of my past experience. But placed as they were before me in dreams like intuitions, and clothed in all their evanescent circumstances and accompanying feelings, I *recognized* them instantaneously. I was once told by a near relative of mine,¹ that having in her childhood fallen into a river, and being on the very verge of death but for the critical assistance which reached her, she saw in a moment her whole life, in its minutest incidents, arrayed before her simultaneously as in a mirror; and she had a faculty developed as suddenly for comprehending the whole and every part. This, from some opium experiences of mine, I can believe; I have, indeed, seen the same thing asserted twice in modern books, and accompanied by a remark which I am convinced is true, namely, that the dread book of account which the Scriptures speak of² is, in fact, the mind itself of each individual. Of this, at least, I feel assured, that there is no such thing as *forgetting* possible to the mind; a thousand accidents may and will interpose a veil between our present consciousness and the secret inscriptions on the mind; accidents of the same sort will also rend away this veil; but alike, whether veiled or unveiled, the inscription remains for ever; just as the stars seem to withdraw before the common light of day, whereas, in fact, we all know that it is the light which is drawn over them as a veil, and that they are waiting to be revealed, when the obscuring daylight shall have withdrawn.

Having noticed these four facts as memorably distinguishing my dreams from those of health, I shall now cite a case illustrative of the first fact; and shall then cite any others that I remember, either in their chronological order, or any other that may give them more effect as pictures to the reader.

I had been in youth, and ever since for occasional amusement, a great reader of Livy, whom I confess that I prefer, both for style and matter, to any other of the Roman

¹It is said that the relative was De Quincey's mother.

²Cf. Revelation, xx, 12.

historians; and I had often felt as most solemn and appalling sounds, and most emphatically representative of the majesty of the Roman people, the two words so often occurring in Livy—*Consul Romanus*; especially when the consul is introduced in his military character. I mean to say, that the words king, sultan, regent, *etc.*, or any other titles of those who embody in their own persons the collective majesty of a great people, had less power over my reverential feelings. I had also, though no great reader of history, made myself minutely and critically familiar with one period of English history, namely, the period of the Parliamentary War, having been attracted by the moral grandeur of some who figured in that day, and by the many interesting memoirs which survive those unquiet times. Both these parts of my lighter reading, having furnished me often with matter of reflection, now furnished me with matter for my dreams. Often I used to see, after painting upon the blank darkness a sort of rehearsal whilst waking, a crowd of ladies, and perhaps a festival, and dances. And I heard it said, or I said to myself, “These are English ladies from the unhappy times of Charles I. These are the wives and daughters of those who met in peace, and sat at the same tables, and were allied by marriage or by blood; and yet, after a certain day in August, 1642,¹ never smiled upon each other again, nor met but in the field of battle; and at Marston Moor, at Newbury, or at Naseby, cut asunder all ties of love by the cruel saber, and washed away in blood the memory of ancient friendship.” The ladies danced, and looked as lovely as at the court of George IV. Yet I knew, even in my dream, that they had been in the grave for nearly two centuries. This pageant would suddenly dissolve; and, at a clapping of hands, would be heard the heart-quaking sound of *Consul Romanus*; and immediately came “sweeping by,” in gorgeous paludaments,² Paulus, or Marius³ girt round by a company of centurions, with the crimson

tunic⁴ hoisted on a spear, and followed by the *alalagmos*⁵ of the Roman legions.

Many years ago, when I was looking over Piranesi's⁶ *Antiquities of Rome*, Mr. Coleridge, who was standing by, described to me a set of plates by that artist, called his *Dreams*, and which record the scenery of his own visions during the delirium of a fever: some of them (I describe only from memory of Mr. Coleridge's account) representing vast Gothic halls; on the floor of which stood all sorts of engines and machinery, wheels, cables, pulleys, levers, catapults, *etc.*, *etc.*, expressive of enormous power put forth, and resistance overcome. Creeping along the sides of the walls, you perceived a staircase; and upon it, groping his way upwards, was Piranesi himself. Follow the stairs a little further, and you perceive it to come to a sudden, abrupt termination, without any balustrade, and allowing no step onwards to him who had reached the extremity, except into the depths below. Whatever is to become of poor Piranesi, you suppose, at least, that his labors must in some way terminate here. But raise your eyes, and behold a second flight of stairs still higher; on which again Piranesi is perceived, by this time standing on the very brink of the abyss. Again elevate your eye, and a still more aerial flight of stairs is beheld; and again is poor Piranesi busy on his aspiring labors; and so on, until the unfinished stairs and Piranesi both are lost in the upper gloom of the hall. With the same power of endless growth and self-reproduction did my architecture proceed in dreams. In the early stage of my malady, the splendors of my dreams were indeed chiefly architectural; and I beheld such pomp of cities and palaces as was never yet beheld by the waking eye, unless in the clouds. From a great modern poet I cite the part of a passage which describes, as an appearance actually beheld in the clouds, what in many of its circumstances I saw frequently in sleep:

⁴The signal which announced a day of battle (De Quincey's note, edition of 1856).

⁵A word expressing collectively the gathering of the Roman war-cries—*Alála, A. ía* (De Quincey's note, edition of 1856). Greek *ἀλαλή* means war-cry.

⁶Italian engraver (died 1778). Piranesi never published a set of plates entitled *Dreams*, though some of his engravings depict imaginary edifices.

¹Charles I's standard, which gave the signal for the actual beginning of the English Civil War, was raised at Nottingham on 22 August, 1642.

²Military cloaks, worn by generals and their principal officers.

³Lucius Æmilius Paulus (died 160 B. C.), and Caius Marius (died 86 B. C.).

The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,
 Was of a mighty city—boldly say
 A wilderness of building, sinking far
 And self-withdrawn into a wondrous depth,
 Far sinking into splendor—without end!
 Fabric it seemed of diamond, and of gold,
 With alabaster domes and silver spires,
 And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
 Uplifted; here, serene pavilions bright,
 In avenues disposed; there towers begirt
 With battlements that on their restless fronts
 Bore stars—illumination of all gems!
 By earthly nature had the effect been wrought
 Upon the dark materials of the storm
 Now pacified; on them, and on the coves,
 And mountain-steeps and summits, whereunto
 The vapors had receded—taking there
 Their station under a cerulean sky, etc.¹

The sublime circumstance—"battlements that on their *restless* fronts bore stars"—might have been copied from my architectural dreams, for it often occurred. We hear it reported of Dryden, and of Fuseli² in modern times, that they thought proper to eat raw meat for the sake of obtaining splendid dreams: how much better, for such a purpose, to have eaten opium, which yet I do not remember that any poet is recorded to have done, except the dramatist Shadwell;³ and in ancient days, Homer is, I think, rightly reputed to have known the virtues of opium.⁴

¹Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, Bk. II, ll. 834-851. De Quincey explains, in the edition of 1856, why he did not in the first instance name Wordsworth: "The year in which I wrote and published these *Confessions* was 1821; and at that time the name of Wordsworth, though beginning to emerge from the dark cloud of scorn and contumely which had hitherto overshadowed it, was yet most imperfectly established. Not until ten years later was his greatness cheerfully and generally acknowledged. I, therefore, as the very earliest (without one exception) of all who came forward, in the beginning of his career, to honor and welcome him, shrank with disgust from making any sentence of mine the occasion for an explosion of vulgar malice against him. But the grandeur of the passage here cited inevitably spoke for itself; and he that would have been most scornful on hearing the name of the poet coupled with this epithet of 'great' could not but find his malice intercepted, and himself cheated into cordial admiration, by the splendor of the verses."

²John Henry Fuseli (1741-1825), an artist of Swiss extraction who passed most of his life in England.

³Thomas Shadwell (1640-1692), Dryden's Mac Flecknoe.

⁴The opinion is based on a passage in the *Odyssey*, Bk. IV, where Helen is represented as giving Telemachus a notion which made him oblivious of his sorrows.

To my architecture succeeded dreams of lakes and silvery expanses of water: these haunted me so much, that I feared (though possibly it will appear ludicrous to a medical man) that some dropsical state or tendency of the brain might thus be making itself (to use a metaphysical word) *objective*,⁵ and the sentient organ *project* itself as its own object. For two months I suffered greatly in my head—a part of my bodily structure which had hitherto been so clear from all touch or taint of weakness (physically, I mean) that I used to say of it, as the last Lord Orford⁶ said of his stomach, that it seemed likely to survive the rest of my person. Till now I had never felt a headache even, or any the slightest pain, except rheumatic pains caused by my own folly. However, I got over this attack, though it must have been verging on something very dangerous.

The waters now changed their character—from translucent lakes, shining like mirrors, they now became seas and oceans. And now came a tremendous change, which, unfolding itself slowly like a scroll, through many months, promised an abiding torment; and, in fact, it never left me until the winding up of my case. Hitherto the human face had mixed often in my dreams, but not despotically, nor with any special power of tormenting. But now that which I have called the tyranny of the human face began to unfold itself. Perhaps some part of my London life might be answerable for this. Be that as it may, now it was that upon the rocking waters of the ocean the human face began to appear; the sea appeared paved with innumerable faces, upturned to the heavens; faces imploring, wrathful, despairing, surged upwards by thousands, by myriads, by generations, by centuries: my agitation was infinite, my mind tossed, and surged with the ocean.

May, 1818.—The Malay had been a fearful enemy for months. I have been every night, through his means, transported into Asiatic scenes. I know not whether others

⁵This word, so nearly unintelligible in 1821, so intensely scholastic, and, consequently, when surrounded by familiar and vernacular words, so apparently pedantic, yet, on the other hand, so indispensable to accurate thinking, and to *wide* thinking, has since 1821 become too common to need any apology (De Quincey's note, edition of 1856).

⁶Horace Walpole (1717-1797).

share in my feelings on this point; but I have often thought that if I were compelled to forego England, and to live in China, and among Chinese manners and modes of life and scenery, I should go mad. The causes of my horror lie deep, and some of them must be common to others. Southern Asia, in general, is the seat of awful images and associations. As the cradle of the human race, it would alone have a dim and reverential feeling connected with it. But there are other reasons. No man can pretend that the wild, barbarous, and capricious superstitions of Africa, or of savage tribes elsewhere, affect him in the way that he is affected by the ancient, monumental, cruel, and elaborate religions of Indostan, *etc.* The mere antiquity of Asiatic things, of their institutions, histories, modes of faith, *etc.*, is so impressive, that to me the vast age of the race and name overpowers the sense of youth in the individual. A young Chinese seems to me an antediluvian man renewed. Even Englishmen, though not bred in any knowledge of such institutions, cannot but shudder at the mystic sublimity of *castes* that have flowed apart, and refused to mix, through such immemorial tracts of time; nor can any man fail to be awed by the names of the Ganges, or the Euphrates. It contributes much to these feelings, that Southern Asia is, and has been for thousands of years, the part of the earth most swarming with human life, the great *officina gentium*.¹ Man is a weed in those regions. The vast empires, also, into which the enormous population of Asia has always been cast, give a further sublimity to the feelings associated with all oriental names or images. In China, over and above what it has in common with the rest of Southern Asia, I am terrified by the modes of life, by the manners, and the barrier of utter abhorrence, and want of sympathy, placed between us by feelings deeper than I can analyze. I could sooner live with lunatics, or brute animals. All this, and much more than I can say, or have time to say, the reader must enter into, before he can comprehend the unimaginable horror which these dreams of oriental imagery, and mythological tortures, impressed upon me. Under the connecting

feeling of tropical heat and vertical sunlights, I brought together all creatures, birds, beasts, reptiles, all trees and plants, usages and appearances, that are found in all tropical regions, and assembled them together in China or Indostan. From kindred feelings, I soon brought Egypt and all her gods under the same law. I was stared at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at, by monkeys, by paroquets, by cockatoos. I ran into pagodas, and was fixed, for centuries, at the summit, or in secret rooms: I was the idol; I was the priest; I was worshiped; I was sacrificed. I fled from the wrath of Brama² through all the forests of Asia: Vishnu hated me; Seeva laid wait for me. I came suddenly upon Isis and Osiris;³ I had done a deed, they said, which the ibis and the crocodile⁴ trembled at. I was buried for a thousand years in stone coffins, with mummies and sphinxes, in narrow chambers at the heart of eternal pyramids. I was kissed, with cancerous kisses, by crocodiles; and laid, confounded with all unutterable slimy things, amongst reeds and Nilotic mud.⁵

I thus give the reader some slight abstraction of my oriental dreams, which always filled me with such amazement at the monstrous scenery, that horror seemed absorbed, for a while, in sheer astonishment. Sooner or later came a reflux of feeling that swallowed up the astonishment, and left me, not so much in terror, as in hatred and abomination of what I saw. Over every form, and threat, and punishment, and dim sightless incarceration, brooded a sense of eternity and infinity that drove me into an oppression as of madness. Into these dreams only, it was, with one or two slight exceptions, that any circumstances of physical horror entered. All before had been moral and spiritual terrors. But here the main agents were ugly birds, or snakes, or crocodiles, especially the last. The cursed crocodile became to me the object of more horror than almost all the rest. I was compelled to live with him; and (as was always

²Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva compose the Trinity of the Hindu religion of Brahmanism.

³Female and male deities, sister and brother, in Egyptian mythology.

⁴Both sacred animals to the Egyptians.

⁵*I.e.*, mud of the Nile.

¹Workshop of races.

the case, almost, in my dreams) for centuries. I escaped sometimes, and found myself in Chinese houses with cane tables, *etc.* All the feet of the tables, sofas, *etc.*, soon became instinct with life: the abominable head of the crocodile, and his leering eyes, looked out at me, multiplied into a thousand repetitions; and I stood loathing and fascinated. And so often did this hideous reptile haunt my dreams, that many times the very same dream was broken up in the very same way: I heard gentle voices speaking to me (I hear everything when I am sleeping), and instantly I awoke: it was broad noon, and my children were standing, hand in hand, at my bedside; come to show me their colored shoes, or new frocks, or to let me see them dressed for going out. I protest that so awful was the transition from the damned crocodile, and the other unutterable monsters and abortions of my dreams, to the sight of innocent *human* natures and of infancy, that, in the mighty and sudden revulsion of mind, I wept, and could not forbear it, as I kissed their faces.

V

As a final specimen, I cite one of a different character, from 1820.

The dream commenced with a music which now I often heard in dreams—a music of preparation and of awakening suspense; a music like the opening of the Coronation Anthem, and which, like *that*, gave the feeling of a vast march, of infinite cavalcades filing off, and the tread of innumerable armies. The morning was come of a mighty day—a day of crisis and of final hope for human nature, then suffering some mysterious eclipse, and laboring in some dread extremity. Somewhere, I knew not where—somehow, I knew not how—by some beings, I knew not whom—a battle, a strife, an agony, was conducting—was evolving like a great drama, or piece of music; with which my sympathy was the more insupportable from my confusion as to its place, its cause, its nature, and its possible issue. I, as is usual in dreams (where, of necessity, we make ourselves central to every movement), had the power, and yet had not the power, to decide it. I had the power, if I could raise myself, to will it; and yet again had not the power, for the weight of twenty Atlantics

was upon me, or the oppression of inextinguishable guilt. “Deeper than ever plummet sounded,”¹ I lay inactive. Then, like a chorus, the passion deepened. Some greater interest was at stake; some mightier cause than ever yet the sword had pleaded, or trumpet had proclaimed. Then came sudden alarms; hurrys to and fro; trepidations of innumerable fugitives. I knew not whether from the good cause or the bad; darkness and lights; tempest and human faces; and at last, with the sense that all was lost, female forms, and the features that were worth all the world to me, and but a moment allowed—and clasped hands, and heart-breaking partings, and then—everlasting farewells! and, with a sigh, such as the caves of hell sighed when the incestuous mother uttered the abhorred name of death,² the sound was reverberated—everlasting farewells! and again, and yet again reverberated—everlasting farewells!

And I awoke in struggles, and cried aloud—“I will sleep no more!”

SUSPIRIA DE PROFUNDIS

BEING A SEQUEL TO “THE CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER”³

LEVANA AND OUR LADIES OF SORROW

OFTENTIMES at Oxford I saw Levana in my dreams. I knew her by her Roman symbols. Who is Levana? Reader, that do not pretend to have leisure for very much scholarship, you will not be angry with me for telling you. Levana was the Roman goddess that performed for the new-born infant the earliest office of ennobling kindness—typical, by its mode, of that grandeur which belongs to man everywhere, and of that benignity in powers invisible which even in pagan worlds sometimes descends to sustain it. At the very moment of birth, just as the infant tasted for the first time the atmosphere of our troubled planet, it was laid on the ground. *That* might bear different interpretations. But immediately,

¹Cf. *The Tempest*, V, i, 56.

²Cf. *Paradise Lost*, Bk. II, l. 746 and following lines.

³The title means breathings, or sighs, from the depths. *Levana* was first published in the June, 1845, issue of *Blackwood's Magazine*.

lest so grand a creature should grovel there for more than one instant, either the paternal hand, as proxy for the goddess Levana, or some near kinsman, as proxy for the father, raised it upright, bade it look erect as the king of all this world, and presented its forehead to the stars, saying, perhaps, in his heart, "Behold what is greater than yourselves!" This symbolic act represented the function of Levana. And that mysterious lady, who never revealed her face (except to me in dreams), but always acted by delegation, had her name from the Latin verb (as still it is the Italian verb) *levare*, to raise aloft.

This is the explanation of Levana. And hence it has arisen that some people have understood by Levana the tutelary power that controls the education of the nursery. She, that would not suffer at his birth even a prefigurative or mimic degradation for her awful ward, far less could be supposed to suffer the real degradation attaching to the non-development of his powers. She therefore watches over human education. Now, the word *educo*, with the penultimate short, was derived (by a process often exemplified in the crystallization of languages) from the word *educo*, with the penultimate long. Whatsoever *educes*, or develops, *educates*. By the education of Levana, therefore, is meant—not the poor machinery that moves by spelling-books and grammars, but that mighty system of central forces hidden in the deep bosom of human life, which by passion, by strife, by temptation, by the energies of resistance, works for ever upon children—resting not day or night, any more than the mighty wheel of day and night themselves, whose moments, like restless spokes, are glimmering¹ for ever as they revolve.

If, then, *these* are the ministries by which Levana works, how profoundly must she reverence the agencies of grief! But you, reader, think that children generally are not

¹As I have never allowed myself to covet any man's ox nor his ass, nor anything that is his, still less would it become a philosopher to covet other people's images or metaphors. Here, therefore, I restore to Mr. Wordsworth this fine image of the revolving wheel and the glimmering spokes, as applied by him to the flying successions of day and night. I borrowed it for one moment in order to point my own sentence; which being done, the reader is witness that I now pay it back in-

liable to grief such as mine. There are two senses in the word *generally*—the sense of Euclid, where it means *universally* (or in the whole extent of the *genus*), and a foolish sense of this word, where it means *usually*. Now, I am far from saying that children universally are capable of grief like mine. But there are more than you ever heard of who die of grief in this island of ours. I will tell you a common case. The rules of Eton require that a boy on the *foundation*² should be there twelve years: he is superannuated at eighteen, consequently he must come at six. Children torn away from mothers and sisters at that age not unfrequently die. I speak of what I know. The complaint is not entered by the registrar as grief, but *that* it is. Grief of that sort, and at that age, has killed more than ever have been counted amongst its martyrs.

Therefore it is that Levana often communes with the powers that shake man's heart; therefore it is that she dotes upon grief. "These ladies," said I softly to myself, on seeing the ministers with whom Levana was conversing, "these are the Sorrows, and they are three in number, as the *Graces* are three, who dress man's life with beauty; the *Parcæ*³ are three, who weave the dark arras⁴ of man's life in their mysterious loom always with colors sad in part, sometimes angry with tragic crimson and black; the *Furies* are three, who visit with retributions called from the other side of the grave offenses that walk upon this; and once even the *Muses* were but three, who fit the harp, the trumpet, or the lute, to the great burdens of man's impassioned creations. These are the Sorrows, all three of whom I know." The last words I say *now*; but in Oxford I said, "one of whom I know, and the others too surely I *shall* know." For already, in my fervent youth,

stantly by a note made for that sole purpose. On the same principle I often borrow their seals from young ladies, when closing my letters, because there is sure to be some tender sentiment upon them about "memory," or "hope," or "roses," or "reunion," and my correspondent must be a sad brute who is not touched by the eloquence of the seal, even if his taste is so bad that he remains deaf to mine (De Quincey's note).

²*I. e.*, holding a scholarship, provided for in the college's original endowment.

³The Fates.

⁴Tapestry, originally tapestry made at Arras, France.

I saw (dimly relieved upon the dark background of my dreams) the imperfect lineaments of the awful Sisters.

These Sisters—by what name shall we call them? If I say simply, "The Sorrows," there will be a chance of mistaking the term; it might be understood of individual sorrow—separate cases of sorrow—whereas I want a term expressing the mighty abstractions that incarnate themselves in all individual sufferings of man's heart, and I wish to have these abstractions presented as impersonations—that is, as clothed with human attributes of life, and with functions pointing to flesh. Let us call them, therefore, *Our Ladies of Sorrow*.

I know them thoroughly, and have walked in all their kingdoms. Three sisters they are, of one mysterious household; and their paths are wide apart; but of their dominion there is no end. Them I saw often conversing with Levana, and sometimes about myself. Do they talk, then? O no! Mighty phantoms like these disdain the infirmities of language. They may utter voices through the organs of man when they dwell in human hearts, but amongst themselves is no voice nor sound; eternal silence reigns in *their* kingdoms. They spoke not as they talked with Levana; they whispered not; they sang not; though oftentimes methought they *might* have sung: for I upon earth had heard their mysteries oftentimes deciphered by harp and timbrel, by dulcimer and organ. Like God, whose servants they are, they utter their pleasure not by sounds that perish, or by words that go astray, but by signs in heaven, by changes on earth, by pulses in secret rivers, heraldries painted on darkness, and hieroglyphics written on the tablets of the brain. *They* wheeled in mazes; *I* spelled the steps. *They* telegraphed from afar; *I* read the signals. *They* conspired together; and on the mirrors of darkness *my* eye traced the plots. *Theirs* were the symbols; *mine* are the words.

What is it the Sisters are? What is it that they do? Let me describe their form and their presence, if form it were that still fluctuated in its outline, or presence it were that for ever advanced to the front or for ever receded amongst shades.

The eldest of the three is named *Mater Lachrymarum*, Our Lady of Tears. She it is

that night and day raves and moans, calling for vanished faces. She stood in Rama, where a voice was heard of lamentation—Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted.¹ She it was that stood in Bethlehem on the night when Herod's sword swept its nurseries of Innocents, and the little feet were stiffened for ever which, heard at times as they trotted along floors overhead, woke pulses of love in household hearts that were not unmarked in heaven. Her eyes are sweet and subtle, wild and sleepy, by turns; oftentimes rising to the clouds, oftentimes challenging the heavens. She wears a diadem round her head. And I knew by childish memories that she could go abroad upon the winds, when she heard the sobbing of litanies, or the thundering of organs, and when she beheld the mustering of summer clouds. This Sister, the elder, it is that carries keys more than papal at her girdle, which open every cottage and every palace. She, to my knowledge, sat all last summer by the bedside of the blind beggar, him that so often and so gladly I talked with, whose pious daughter, eight years old, with the sunny countenance, resisted the temptations of play and village mirth, to travel all day long on dusty roads with her afflicted father. For this did God send her a great reward. In the spring-time of the year, and whilst yet her own spring was budding, He recalled her to himself. But her blind father mourns for ever over *her*; still he dreams at midnight that the little guiding hand is locked within his own; and still he wakens to a darkness that is *now* within a second and a deeper darkness. This *Mater Lachrymarum* also has been sitting all this winter of 1844-5 within the bedchamber of the Czar, bringing before his eyes a daughter (not less pious) that vanished to God not less suddenly, and left behind her a darkness not less profound.² By the power of the keys it is that Our Lady of Tears glides, a ghostly intruder, into the chambers of sleepless men, sleepless women, sleepless children, from Ganges to the Nile, from Nile to Mississippi. And *her*, because she is the first-born of her house, and has the widest empire, let us honor with the title of "Madonna."

¹See Jeremiah, xxxi, 15, and St. Matthew, ii, 18.

²The Princess Alexandra, third daughter of the Czar Nicholas, died in August, 1844.

The second Sister is called *Mater Suspiriorum*, Our Lady of Sighs. She never scales the clouds, nor walks abroad upon the winds. She wears no diadem. And her eyes, if they were ever seen, would be neither sweet nor subtle; no man could read their story; they would be found filled with perishing dreams, and with wrecks of forgotten delirium. But she raises not her eyes; her head, on which sits a dilapidated turban, droops for ever, for ever fastens on the dust. She weeps not. She groans not. But she sighs inaudibly at intervals. Her sister, Madonna, is oftentimes stormy and frantic, raging in the highest against heaven, and demanding back her darlings. But Our Lady of Sighs never clamors, never defies, dreams not of rebellious aspirations: She is humble to abjectness. Hers is the meekness that belongs to the hopeless. Murmur she may, but it is in her sleep. Whisper she may, but it is to herself in the twilight. Mutter she does at times, but it is in solitary places that are desolate as she is desolate, in ruined cities, and when the sun has gone down to his rest. This Sister is the visitor of the Pariah, of the Jew, of the bondsman to the oar in the Mediterranean galleys; of the English criminal in Norfolk Island,¹ blotted out from the books of remembrance in sweet far-off England; of the baffled penitent reverting his eyes for ever upon a solitary grave, which to him seems the altar overthrown of some past and bloody sacrifice, on which altar no oblations can now be availing, whether towards pardon that he might implore, or towards reparation that he might attempt. Every slave that at noonday looks up to the tropical sun with timid reproach, as he points with one hand to the earth, our general mother, but for *him* a stepmother, as he points with the other hand to the Bible, our general teacher, but against *him* sealed and sequestered;² every woman sitting in darkness, without love to shelter her head, or hope to illumine her solitude, because the

heaven-born instincts kindling in her nature germs of holy affections, which God implanted in her womanly bosom, having been stifled by social necessities, now burn sullenly to waste, like sepulchral lamps amongst the ancients; every nun defrauded of her unreturning May-time by wicked kinsman, whom God will judge; every captive in every dungeon; all that are betrayed, and all that are rejected; outcasts by traditionary law, and children of *hereditary* disgrace—all these walk with Our Lady of Sighs. She also carries a key, but she needs it little. For her kingdom is chiefly amongst the tents of Shem,³ and the houseless vagrant of every clime. Yet in the very highest ranks of man she finds chapels of her own; and even in glorious England there are some that, to the world, carry their heads as proudly as the reindeer, who yet secretly have received her mark upon their foreheads.

But the third Sister, who is also the youngest—! Hush! whisper whilst we talk of *her*! Her kingdom is not large, or else no flesh should live; but within that kingdom all power is hers. Her head, turreted like that of Cybele,⁴ rises almost beyond the reach of sight. She droops not; and her eyes, rising so high, *might* be hidden by distance. But, being what they are, they cannot be hidden; through the treble veil of crape which she wears the fierce light of a blazing misery, that rests not for matins or for vespers, for noon of day or noon of night, for ebbing or for flowing tide, may be read from the very ground. She is the defier of God. She also is the mother of lunacies, and the suggestress of suicides. Deep lie the roots of her power; but narrow is the nation that she rules. For she can approach only those in whom a profound nature has been upheaved by central convulsions; in whom the heart trembles and the brain rocks under conspiracies of tempest from without and tempest from within. Madonna moves with uncertain steps, fast or slow, but still with tragic grace. Our Lady of Sighs creeps timidly and stealthily. But this youngest Sister moves with incalculable motions, bounding, and with a tiger's leaps. She carries no key; for, though coming rarely amongst men, she storms all doors at which

¹In the southern Pacific, east of Australia; formerly used by England as a penal settlement.

²This, the reader will be aware, applies chiefly to the cotton and tobacco States of North America; but not to them only: on which account I have not scrupled to figure the sun, which looks down upon slavery, as *tropical*,—no matter if strictly within the tropics, or simply so near to them as to produce a similar climate (De Quincey's note).

³See Genesis, ix, 27.

⁴Nature goddess of the peoples of Asia Minor. She was pictured wearing a turreted diadem.

she is permitted to enter at all. And *her* name is *Mater Tenebrarum*—Our Lady of Darkness.

These were the *Semnai Theai* or Sublime Goddesses,¹ these were the *Eumenides* or Gracious Ladies (so called by antiquity in shuddering propitiation) of my Oxford dreams. Madonna spoke. She spoke by her mysterious hand. Touching my head, she beckoned to Our Lady of Sighs; and *what* she spoke, translated out of the signs which (except in dreams) no man reads, was this:

"Lo! here is he whom in childhood I dedicated to my altars. This is he that once I made my darling. Him I led astray, him I beguiled; and from heaven I stole away his young heart to mine. Through me did he become idolatrous; and through me it was, by languishing desires, that he worshiped the worm, and prayed to the wormy grave. Holy was the grave to him; lovely was its darkness; saintly its corruption. Him, this young idolator, I have seasoned for thee, dear gentle Sister of Sighs! Do thou take him now to *thy* heart, and season him for our dreadful sister. And thou"—turning to the *Mater Tenebrarum*, she said—"wicked

sister, that temptest and hatest, do thou take him from *her*. See that thy scepter lie heavy on his head. Suffer not woman and her tenderness to sit near him in his darkness. Banish the frailties of hope, wither the relenting of love, scorch the fountains of tears, curse him as only *thou* canst curse. So shall he be accomplished in the furnace, so shall he see the things that ought *not* to be seen, sights that are abominable, and secrets that are unutterable. So shall he read elder truths, sad truths, grand truths, fearful truths. So shall he rise again *before* he dies. And so shall our commission be accomplished which from God we had—to plague his heart until we had unfolded the capacities of his spirit."²

²The reader who wishes at all to understand the course of these Confessions ought not to pass over this dream-legend. There is no great wonder that a vision which occupied my waking thoughts in those years should reappear in my dreams. It was, in fact, a legend recurring in sleep, most of which I had myself silently written or sculptured in my daylight reveries. But its importance to the present Confessions is this, that it rehearses or prefigures their course. This *FIRST* part belongs to Madonna. The *THIRD* belongs to the "*Mater Suspiriorum*," and will be entitled *The Pariah Worlds*. The *FOURTH*, which terminates the work, belongs to the "*Mater Tenebrarum*," and will be entitled *The Kingdom of Darkness*. As to the *SECOND*, it is an interpolation requisite to the effect of the others, and will be explained in its proper place (De Quincey's note). The plan here somewhat vaguely outlined was never completed by De Quincey.

¹The word *σεμνος* is usually rendered *venerable* in dictionaries—not a very flattering epithet for females. But I am disposed to think that it comes nearest to our idea of the *sublime*—as near as a Greek word *could* come (De Quincey's note).

THOMAS CARLYLE (1795-1881)

Carlyle was born at Ecclefechan, Dumfriesshire, Scotland, on 4 December, 1795. His father was a stone-mason, and a man of highly unusual character. "More remarkable man than my father," the son wrote, "I have never met in my journey through life; sterling sincerity in thought, word, and deed, most quiet, but capable of blazing into whirlwinds when needful, and such a flash of just insight and natural eloquence and emphasis, true to every feature of it, as I have never known in any other. . . . None of us will ever forget that bold, glowing style of his, flowing free from the untutored soul, full of metaphor, though he knew not what metaphor was, with all manner of potent words which he appropriated and applied with surprising accuracy." This characterization of his father helps us to see how Carlyle came to be the man he was, for sincerity was the touchstone by which the son later tried the world's great men, and the son's burning yet struggling utterance was clearly the development of a heritage. As a boy Carlyle received his first training in the village of his birth, and there showed such mental aptitude that his parents sent him to the Annan Grammar School in 1805. As he continued to show parts above the usual, his parents hoped that he might qualify himself for the ministry of the Scottish Kirk, and so in the fall of 1809 Carlyle walked the eighty miles from Ecclefechan to Edinburgh to enter the University there. At Edinburgh he continued, as at Annan, to read widely, but with little or no guidance. Edinburgh he later called "the worst of all hitherto discovered universities," which means, as has been said, that he found no Fichte there to pierce the deep springs of idealism in his nature. Full self-discovery was only to come later, after painful enough wanderings. In 1814 he left the University and became the mathematical teacher at Annan Grammar School. Two years later he was appointed master of a school in Kirkcaldy, a position which he held until the fall of 1818. Meanwhile doubts had been growing in him about entrance into the ministry, and he had finally determined in 1817 that he could not do it—a decision severely disappointing to his parents but one which they accepted without remonstrance. After leaving Kirkcaldy Carlyle spent some time in Edinburgh, doing some writing and attempting to study the law, but the law too he found impossible as a career. And while he was thus uncertain about his future he was suffering physical anguish from dyspepsia, a curse which never left him, and spiritual anguish from the confused state of his beliefs. Unable to accept the simple Christianity of his mother, or any miraculously revealed religion, he yet reacted against the "mechanical philosophy" of the eighteenth century. He accepted the destructive work of Hume and Gibbon, whom he had been reading, but not their explicit or implied constructions—yet he knew of nothing with which to fill the void. It was at this juncture that he began the study of German, and presently found answers to his questions in the works of the transcendentalists, particularly in Jean Paul Richter and Fichte. In 1822 he began doing some writing for periodicals about his German discoveries, and from that year until 1824 he held a position as tutor in the Buller family. Meanwhile in 1821 he had met Jane Baillie Welsh, a brilliant girl to whom he was deeply attracted and whom he later married, in 1826.

By this time Carlyle was definitely committed to literature as a career. He and his wife lived in Edinburgh until 1828, when they moved to Craigenputtock, a farm-house in Dumfriesshire, fifteen miles from anywhere. The loneliness of the place was disagreeable to Mrs. Carlyle but the two lived there, save for visits to London—when Carlyle became acquainted with John Stuart Mill and other men of letters—and Edinburgh, for six years; and during the earlier years of this period Carlyle fairly found himself, and managed to get expressed in *Sartor Resartus* the chief ideas on which his later writings depend. In 1834 he moved to London and took the house in Cheyne Row, Chelsea, in which he lived throughout the remainder of his life. He was now at work upon his history of *The French Revolution*. Composition was always extraordinarily difficult for him, and while work was in progress he lived in anguish and despair. Mrs. Carlyle spoke, when a later work was being written, about living in "the valley of the shadow of Cromwell." But, as if this were not enough, when the first volume of *The French Revolution* was finished Carlyle suffered an additional grievous blow. He lent the manuscript of the volume to J. S. Mill, who lent it to Mrs. Taylor, whose maid burned it up. Carlyle had no notes, he was shattered by the pains the volume had cost him, he was hoping in despair only somehow to get the work done, whether it should be good or bad, and he was writing, besides, against time, as he had practically no money and was staking everything on this book. The misfortune, however, brought out all the fineness of his nature in the gentleness with which he treated Mill, and, after several months of ineffectual effort, he heroically set to work and rewrote his volume. In January, 1837, the work was finished, and

was published that year. Carlyle said to his wife, "I know not whether this book is worth anything, nor what the world will do with it, or misdo, or entirely forbear to do, as is likeliest; but this I could tell the world: You have not had for a hundred years any book that comes more direct and flamingly from the heart of a living man. Do what you like with it, you." The world bought, and read, and praised, and Carlyle's position as a writer was secure from this time. In the years from 1837 to 1840 he delivered several courses of lectures in London, one of which, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, has been probably his most widely read book. During these years he was also occupied in applying his ideas to contemporary political and social questions. He published *Chartism* in 1840 and *Past and Present* in 1843. In 1845 he published *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, in 1850 the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, and in 1851 *The Life of John Sterling*. Sterling was a disciple of Coleridge and a man of singularly winning personality who, before his untimely death, had attracted the interest and friendship of Carlyle. From 1851 until 1865 he was at work upon his *History of Frederick the Great*, which was published in six volumes, 1858-1865. In the latter year he was elected Lord Rector of Edinburgh University, where he delivered his inaugural address in April, 1866, less than three weeks before the sudden death of Mrs. Carlyle. Their married life had not been happy, and Mrs. Carlyle's death awoke in her husband bitter grief and remorse for the wrongs which he now felt he had done her. The remaining years of his life were full of honors from the outer world, full of sadness welling up from the world within. He died on 5 February, 1881, and was buried at Ecclefechan.

Sartor Resartus is the most fully expressive of Carlyle's writings, and it contains all the ideas which he variously developed in his other works. They are not many. "Belief in human freedom and in the 'infinite nature of Duty,' as the basis of religion; belief in the rule of the few wise and strong over the many weak and foolish, as the basis of government; belief in mutual sympathy, as the basis of society; belief in a spiritual interpretation of natural appearances, as the basis of philosophy; and, above all, belief in sincerity as the condition of all knowledge—these are the foundations upon which Carlyle built, and they will all be found well and truly laid in *Sartor*" (P. C. Parr, *Introd. to Sartor*, p. v).

SARTOR RESARTUS¹

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

CONSIDERING our present advanced state of culture, and how the Torch of Science has now been brandished and borne about, with more or less effect, for five-thousand years and upwards; how, in these times especially, not only the Torch still burns, and perhaps more fiercely than ever, but innumerable Rush-lights, and Sulphur-matches, kindled thereat, are also glancing in every direction, so that not the smallest cranny or doghole in Nature or Art can remain unilluminated,—it might strike the reflective mind with some surprise that hitherto little or nothing of a fundamental character, whether in the way of Philosophy or History, has been written on the subject of Clothes.

Our Theory of Gravitation is as good as perfect: Lagrange,² it is well known, has

¹First written in the fall of 1830, then revised and enlarged in the months from February until August, 1831. Printed in *Fraser's Magazine*, 1833-1834. First published as a book in America (Boston), 1836; first English edition, 1838. The title means, "the tailor patched." Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, author of the philosophy of clothes, is the tailor; Carlyle does the patching as his editor.

proved that the Planetary System, on this scheme, will endure for ever; Laplace,³ still more cunningly, even guesses that it could not have been made on any other scheme. Whereby, at least, our nautical Logbooks can be better kept; and water-transport of all kinds has grown more commodious. Of Geology and Geognosy⁴ we know enough: what with the labors of our Werners⁵ and Huttons,⁶ what with the ardent genius of their disciples, it has come about that now, to many a Royal Society, the Creation of a World is little more mysterious than the cooking of a dumpling; concerning which last, indeed, there have been minds to whom the question, *How the apples were got in*, presented difficulties.⁷ Why mention our disquisitions on the Social Contract, on the Standard of Taste, on the Migrations of the Herring? Then, have we not a Doctrine of Rent, a Theory of Value; Philosophies of Language, of History, of Pottery, of Appa-

²French mathematician (1736-1813).

³French astronomer and mathematician (1749-1827). Carlyle saw him in Paris in 1824.

⁴Knowledge of the earth.

⁵German mineralogist and geologist (1750-1817).

⁶British geologist (1726-1797).

⁷The question is asked by George III in *The Apple Dumplings and the King*, a poem by John Walcott (Peter Pindar).

ritions, of Intoxicating Liquors? Man's whole life and environment have been laid open and elucidated; scarcely a fragment or fiber of his Soul, Body, and Possessions, but has been probed, dissected, distilled, desiccated,¹ and scientifically decomposed: our spiritual Faculties, of which it appears there are not a few, have their Stewarts,² Cousins,³ Royer Collards:⁴ every cellular, vascular, muscular Tissue glories in its Lawrences,⁵ Majendies,⁶ Bichâts.⁷

How, then, comes it, may the reflective mind repeat, that the grand Tissue of all Tissues, the only real Tissue, should have been quite overlooked by Science,—the vestural Tissue, namely, of woolen or other cloth; which Man's Soul wears as its outmost wrappage and overall; wherein his whole other Tissues are included and screened, his whole Faculties work, his whole Self lives, moves, and has its being? For if, now and then, some straggling, broken-winged thinker has cast an owl's-glance into this obscure region, the most have soared over it altogether heedless; regarding Clothes as a property, not an accident,⁸ as quite natural and spontaneous, like the leaves of trees, like the plumage of birds. In all speculations they have tacitly figured man as a *Clothed Animal*; whereas he is by nature a *Naked Animal*; and only in certain circumstances, by purpose and device, masks himself in Clothes. Shakespeare says, we are creatures that look before and after:⁹ the more surprising that we do not look round a little, and see what is passing under our very eyes.

But here, as in so many other cases, Ger-

many, learned, indefatigable, deep-thinking Germany comes to our aid. It is, after all, a blessing that, in these revolutionary times, there should be one country where abstract Thought can still take shelter; that while the din and frenzy of Catholic Emancipations,¹⁰ and Rotten Boroughs,¹¹ and Revolts of Paris,¹² deafen every French and every English ear, the German can stand peaceful on his scientific watch-tower; and, to the raging, struggling multitude here and elsewhere, solemnly, from hour to hour, with preparatory blast of cowhorn, emit his *Höret ihr Herren und lasset's Euch sagen*;¹³ in other words, tell the Universe, which so often forgets that fact, what o'clock it really is. Not unfrequently the Germans have been blamed for an unprofitable diligence; as if they struck into devious courses, where nothing was to be had but the toil of a rough journey; as if, forsaking the gold-mines of finance and that political slaughter of fat oxen whereby a man himself grows fat, they were apt to run goose-hunting into regions of bilberries and crowberries, and be swallowed up at last in remote peat-bogs.¹⁴ Of that unwise science, which, as our Humorist expresses it,—

By geometric scale

Doth take the size of pots of ale;¹⁵

still more, of that altogether misdirected industry, which is seen vigorously thrashing mere straw, there can nothing defensive be said. In so far as the Germans are chargeable with such, let them take the consequence. Nevertheless, be it remarked, that even a Russian steppe has tumuli and gold ornaments; also many a scene that looks desert and rock-bound from the distance, will unfold itself, when visited, into rare valleys. Nay, in any case, would Criticism erect not only finger-posts and turnpikes, but spiked gates and impassable barriers, for the mind

¹Dried up.

²Philosopher, professor at Edinburgh University 753-1828).

³Philosopher and statesman (1792-1867).

⁴Philosopher, taught the doctrines of Thomas Reid (1763-1845).

⁵English surgeon and anatomist (1783-1867).

⁶French physiologist, one of the earliest vivisectioners (1783-1855).

⁷French surgeon and physiologist (1771-1802).

⁸Terms used in logic. A "property" is an attribute which is inseparable from an object without altering its essential nature; an "accident" is an attribute which may be removed, or may be supposed removed, without altering an object's essence. In man the power of understanding speech is a property; his color is an accident.

⁹*Hamlet*, IV, iv.

¹⁰The bill removing civil disabilities from Roman Catholics was passed in 1829.

¹¹Electoral districts having few or no voters. The Reform Bill of 1832 abolished 56 of these boroughs and gave representation in Parliament to other and populous districts which had had none.

¹²In the Three Days' Revolution of July, 1830, Charles X was expelled from the French throne and Louis-Philippe installed in his place.

¹³Listen, gentlemen, and let me tell you.

¹⁴*I.e.*, go off on a wild-geese chase.

¹⁵Samuel Butler, *Hudibras*, Pt. I, canto i, ll. 121-122.

of man? It is written, "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."¹ Surely the plain rule is, Let each considerate person have his way, and see what it will lead to. For not this man and that man, but all men make up mankind, and their united tasks the task of mankind. How often have we seen some such adventurous, and perhaps much-censured wanderer light on some out-lying, neglected, yet vitally momentous province; the hidden treasures of which he first discovered, and kept proclaiming till the general eye and effort were directed thither, and the conquest was completed;—thereby, in these his seemingly so aimless rambles, planting new standards, founding new habitable colonies, in the immeasurable circumambient realm of Nothingness and Night! Wise man was he who counseled that Speculation should have free course, and look fearlessly towards all the thirty-two points of the compass, whithersoever and howsoever it listed.

Perhaps it is proof of the stunted condition in which pure Science, especially pure moral Science, languishes among us English; and how our mercantile greatness, and invaluable Constitution, impressing a political or other immediately practical tendency on all English culture and endeavor, cramps the free flight of Thought,—that this, not Philosophy of Clothes, but recognition even that we have no such Philosophy, stands here for the first time published in our language. What English intellect could have chosen such a topic, or by chance stumbled on it? But for that same unshackled, and even sequestered condition of the German Learned,² which permits and induces them to fish in all manner of waters, with all manner of nets, it seems probable enough, this abstruse Inquiry might, in spite of the results it leads to, have continued dormant for indefinite periods. The Editor of these sheets, though otherwise boasting himself a man of confirmed speculative habits, and perhaps discursive enough, is free to confess, that never, till these last months, did the above very plain considerations, on our total want of a Philosophy of Clothes, occur to

him; and then, by quite foreign suggestion. By the arrival, namely, of a new Book from Professor Teufelsdröckh³ of Weissnichtwo;⁴ treating expressly of this subject, and in a style which, whether understood or not, could not even by the blindest be overlooked. In the present Editor's way of thought, this remarkable Treatise, with its Doctrines, whether as judicially acceded to, or judicially denied, has not remained without effect.

"*Die Kleider, ihr Werden und Wirken* (Clothes, their Origin and Influence): von Diog. Teufelsdröckh, J. U. D. etc. *Stillschweigen und Co*⁵ *Weissnichtwo*, 1831.

"Here," says the *Weissnichtwo'sche Anzeiger*,⁶ "comes a Volume of that extensive, close-printed, close-meditated sort, which, be it spoken with pride, is seen only in Germany, perhaps only in Weissnichtwo. Issuing from the hitherto irreproachable Firm of Stillschweigen and Company, with every external furtherance, it is of such internal quality as to set Neglect at defiance." * * * * "A work," concludes the well-nigh enthusiastic Reviewer, "interesting alike to the antiquary, the historian, and the philosophic thinker; a masterpiece of boldness, lynx-eyed acuteness, and rugged independent Germanism and Philanthropy (*derber Kerndeutschheit und Menschenliebe*); which will not, assuredly, pass current without opposition in high places; but must and will exalt the almost new name of Teufelsdröckh to the first ranks of Philosophy, in our German Temple of Honor."

Mindful of old friendship, the distinguished Professor, in this the first blaze of his fame, which however does not dazzle him, sends hither a Presentation-copy of his Book; with compliments and encomiums which modesty forbids the present Editor to rehearse; yet without indicated wish or hope of any kind, except what may be implied in the concluding phrase: *Möchte es* (this remarkable Treatise) *auch im Brittischen Boden gedeihen!*⁷

¹Diogenes Teufelsdröckh means, God-born Devil's-dung.

⁴Know-not-where.

⁵Silence and Company. J. U. D. means, Doctor of Laws.

⁶Advertiser.

⁷May it flourish also on British soil!

¹Daniel, xii. 4.

²I.e., scholar (*Gelahrter*).

CHAPTER IV

CHARACTERISTICS

IT WERE a piece of vain flattery to pretend that this Work on Clothes entirely contents us; that it is not, like all works of genius, like the very Sun, which, though the highest published creation, or work of genius, has nevertheless black spots and troubled nebulosities amid its effulgence,—a mixture of insight, inspiration, with dullness, double-vision, and even utter blindness.

Without committing ourselves to those enthusiastic praises and prophesyings of the *Weissnichtwo'sche Anzeiger*, we admitted that the Book had in a high degree excited us to self-activity, which is the best effect of any book; that it had even operated changes in our way of thought; nay, that it promised to prove, as it were, the opening of a new mine-shaft, wherein the whole world of Speculation might henceforth dig to unknown depths. More especially it may now be declared that Professor Teufelsdröckh's acquirements, patience of research, philosophic and even poetic vigor, are here made indisputably manifest; and unhappily no less his prolixity and tortuosity and manifold ineptitude; that, on the whole, as in opening new mine-shafts is not unreasonable, there is much rubbish in his Book, though likewise specimens of almost invaluable ore. A paramount popularity in England we cannot promise him. Apart from the choice of such a topic as Clothes, too often the manner of treating it betokens in the Author a rusticity and academic seclusion, unblamable, indeed inevitable in a German, but fatal to his success with our public.

Of good society Teufelsdröckh appears to have seen little, or has mostly forgotten what he saw. He speaks-out with a strange plainness; calls many things by their mere dictionary names. To him the Upholsterer is no Pontiff, neither is any Drawing-room a Temple, were it never so begilt and overhung: "a whole immensity of Brussels carpets, and pier-glasses, and or-molu," as he himself expresses it, "cannot hide from me that such Drawing-room is simply a section of Infinite Space, where so many God-created Souls do for the time meet together." To Teufelsdröckh the highest Duchess is respectable, is venerable; but

nowise for her pearl bracelets and Malines laces: in his eyes, the star¹ of a Lord is little less and little more than the broad button of Birmingham spelter² in a Clown's smock; "each is an implement," he says, "in its kind; a tag for *hooking-together*; and, for the rest, was dug from the earth, and hammered on a stithy before smith's fingers." Thus does the Professor look in men's faces with a strange impartiality, a strange scientific freedom; like a man unversed in the higher circles, like a man dropped thither from the Moon. Rightly considered, it is in this peculiarity, running through his whole system of thought, that all these shortcomings, over-shootings, and multiform perversities, take rise: if indeed they have not a second source, also natural enough, in his Transcendental Philosophies, and humor of looking at all Matter and Material things as Spirit,³ whereby truly his case were but the more hopeless, the more lamentable.

To the Thinkers of this nation, however, of which class it is firmly believed there are individuals yet extant, we can safely recommend the Work: nay, who knows but among the fashionable ranks too, if it be true, as Teufelsdröckh maintains; that "within the most starched cravat there passes a windpipe and weasand, and under the thickest embroidered waistcoat beats a heart,"—the force of that rapt earnestness may be felt, and here and there an arrow of the soul pierce through? In our wild Seer, shaggy, unkempt, like a Baptist living on locusts and wild honey,⁴ there is an untutored energy, a silent, as it were unconscious, strength, which, except in the higher walks of Literature, must be rare. Many a deep glance, and often with unspeakable precision, has he

¹Part of the insignia of such orders as the Bath and the Garter is a jeweled ornament having the shape of a star.

²Zinc.

³"The guiding principle of all Carlyle's ethical work is the principle of Fichte's speculation, that the world of experience is but the appearance or vesture of the divine idea or life; that in this divine life lie the springs of true poetry, of true science, and of true religion; and that he only has true life whose spirit is interpenetrated with the realities transcending empirical facts, who is willing to resign his own personality in the service of humanity, and who strives incessantly to work out the ideal that gives nobility and grandeur to human effort" (R. Adamson, *Fichte*, p. 79).

⁴St. Matthew, iii, 1-6.

cast into mysterious Nature, and the still more mysterious Life of Man. Wonderful it is with what cutting words, now and then, he severs asunder the confusion; shears down, were it furlongs deep, into the true center of the matter; and there not only hits the nail on the head, but with crushing force smites it home, and buries it.—On the other hand, let us be free to admit, he is the most unequal writer breathing. Often after some such feat, he will play truant for long pages, and go dawdling and dreaming, and mumbling and maundering the merest commonplaces, as if he were asleep with eyes open, which indeed he is.

Of his boundless Learning, and how all reading and literature in most known tongues from *Sanchoniathon*¹ to *Dr. Lingard*,² from your Oriental *Shasters*,³ and *Talmuds*, and *Korans*, with Cassini's⁴ *Siamese Tables*, and Laplace's *Mécanique Céleste*, down to *Robinson Crusoe* and the *Belfast Town and Country Almanack*, are familiar to him,—we shall say nothing: for unexampled as it is with us, to the Germans such universality of study passes without wonder, as a thing commendable, indeed, but natural, indispensable, and there of course. A man that devotes his life to learning, shall he not be learned?

In respect of style our Author manifests the same genial capability, marred too often by the same rudeness, inequality, and apparent want of intercourse with the higher classes. Occasionally, as above hinted, we find consummate vigor, a true inspiration; his burning thoughts step forth in fit burning words, like so many full-formed Minervas, issuing amid flame and splendor from Jove's head; a rich, idiomatic diction, picturesque allusions, fiery poetic emphasis, or quaint tricky turns; all the graces and terrors of a wild Imagination, wedded to the clearest Intellect, alternate in beautiful vicissitude. Were it not that sheer sleeping and soporific passages; circumlocutions, repetitions, touches even of pure doting jargon, so often

intervene! On the whole, Professor Teufelsdröckh is not a cultivated writer. Of his sentences perhaps not more than nine-tenths stand straight on their legs; the remainder are in quite angular attitudes, buttressed-up by props (of parentheses and dashes), and ever with this or the other tagrag hanging from them; a few even sprawl-out helplessly on all sides, quite broken-backed and dismembered. Nevertheless, in almost his very worst moods, there lies in him a singular attraction. A wild tone pervades the whole utterance of the man, like its keynote and regulator; now screwing itself aloft as into the Song of Spirits, or else the shrill mockery of Fiends; now sinking in cadences, not without melodious heartiness, though sometimes abrupt enough, into the common pitch, when we hear it only as a monotonous hum; of which hum the true character is extremely difficult to fix. Up to this hour we have never fully satisfied ourselves whether it is a tone and hum of real Humor, which we reckon among the very highest qualities of genius, or some echo of mere Insanity and Inanity, which doubtless ranks below the very lowest.

Under a like difficulty, in spite even of our personal intercourse, do we still lie with regard to the Professor's moral feeling. Gleams of an ethereal Love burst forth from him, soft wailings of infinite pity; he could clasp the whole Universe into his bosom, and keep it warm; it seems as if under that rude exterior there dwelt a very seraph. Then again he is so sly and still, so imperturbably saturnine; shows such indifference, malign coolness towards all that men strive after; and ever with some half-visible wrinkle of a bitter sardonic humor, if indeed it be not mere stolid callousness,—that you look on him almost with a shudder, as on some incarnate Mephistopheles,⁵ to whom this great terrestrial and celestial Round, after all, were but some huge foolish Whirligig, where kings and beggars, and angels and demons, and stars and street-sweepings, were chaotically whirled, in which only children could take interest. His look, as we mentioned, is probably the gravest ever seen: yet it is not of that cast-iron gravity frequent

¹The name of a supposed Phœnician writer whose works, real or pretended, were used by Philo Byblius in a Phœnician history, part of which is preserved in Eusebius.

²English Roman Catholic historian (1771–1851).

³Textbooks of Hindu laws and religion.

⁴The name of a family of French astronomers who long controlled the Paris Observatory.

⁵An evil spirit, or devil. He appears in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and Goethe's *Faust*.

enough among our own Chancery suitors;¹ but rather the gravity as of some silent, high-encircled mountain-pool, perhaps the crater of an extinct volcano; into whose black deeps you fear to gaze: those eyes, those lights that sparkle in it, may indeed be reflexes of the heavenly Stars, but perhaps also glances from the region of Nether Fire!

Certainly a most involved, self-secluded, altogether enigmatic nature, this of Teufelsdröckh! Here, however, we gladly recall to mind that once we saw him *laugh*; once only, perhaps it was the first and last time in his life; but then such a peal of laughter, enough to have awakened the Seven Sleepers!² It was of Jean Paul's³ doing: some single billow in that vast World-Mahlstrom⁴ of Humor, with its heaven-kissing coruscations, which is now, alas, all congealed in the frost of death! The large-bodied Poet and the small, both large enough in soul, sat talking miscellaneous together, the present Editor being privileged to listen; and now Paul, in his serious way, was giving one of those inimitable "Extra-harangues"; and, as it chanced, On the Proposal for a *Cast-metal King*: gradually a light kindled in our Professor's eyes and face, a beaming, mantling, loveliest light; through those murky features, a radiant, ever-young Apollo looked; and he burst forth like the neighing of all Tattersall's,⁵—tears streaming down his cheeks, pipe held aloft, foot clutched into the air,—loud, long-continuing, uncontrollable; a laugh not of the face and diaphragm only, but of the whole man from head to heel. The present Editor, who laughed indeed, yet with measure, began to fear all was not right: however, Teufelsdröckh composed himself, and sank into his old stillness; on his inscrutable countenance there was, if anything, a slight look of shame; and Richter

himself could not rouse him again. Readers who have any tincture of Psychology know how much is to be inferred from this; and that no man who has once heartily and wholly laughed can be altogether irreclaimably bad. How much lies in Laughter: the cipher-key, wherewith we decipher the whole man! Some men wear an everlasting barren simper; in the smile of others lies a cold glitter as of ice: the fewest are able to laugh, what can be called laughing, but only sniff and titter and snigger from the throat outwards; or at best, produce some whiffing husky cachinnation,⁶ as if they were laughing through wool: of none such comes good. The man who cannot laugh is not only fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;⁷ but his whole life is already a treason and a stratagem.

Considered as an Author, Herr Teufelsdröckh has one scarcely pardonable fault, doubtless his worst: an almost total want of arrangement. In this remarkable Volume, it is true, his adherence to the mere course of Time produces, through the Narrative portions, a certain show of outward method; but of true logical method and sequence there is too little. Apart from its multifarious sections and subdivisions, the Work naturally falls into two Parts; a Historical-Descriptive, and a Philosophical-Speculative: but falls, unhappily, by no firm line of demarcation; in that labyrinthic combination, each Part overlaps, and indents, and indeed runs quite through the other. Many sections are of a debatable rubric,⁸ or even quite nondescript and unnameable; whereby the Book not only loses in accessibility, but too often distresses us like some mad banquet, wherein all courses had been confounded, and fish and flesh, soup and solid, oyster-sauce, lettuces, Rhine-wine and French mustard, were hurled into one huge tureen or trough, and the hungry Public invited to help itself. To bring what order we can out of this Chaos shall be part of our endeavor.

¹In Carlyle's day the English Court of Chancery was a place of almost infinite delays and red tape.

²Of Ephesus. (See note to De Quincey's *Confessions*, first passage.)

³Jean Paul Friedrich Richter (1763–1825), German humorist.

⁴A whirlpool in the Arctic Ocean near the coast of Norway.

⁵A famous horse-market and stable in London.

⁶Immoderate laugh.

⁷*Merchant of Venice*, V, i, 85.

⁸Chapter or subject headings, or the like, written in red in early manuscripts.

BOOK III

CHAPTER VIII

NATURAL SUPERNATURALISM

IT IS in his stupendous Section, headed *Natural Supernaturalism*, that the Professor first becomes a Seer; and, after long effort, such as we have witnessed, finally subdues under his feet this refractory Clothes-Philosophy, and takes victorious possession thereof. Phantasms enough he has had to struggle with; "Cloth-webs and Cob-webs," of Imperial Mantles, Superannuated Symbols, and what not: yet still did he courageously pierce through. Nay, worst of all, two quite mysterious, world-embracing Phantasms, TIME and SPACE,¹ have ever hovered round him, perplexing and bewildering: but with these also he now resolutely grapples, these also he victoriously rends asunder. In a word, he has looked fixedly on Existence, till, one after the other, its earthly hulls and garnitures have all melted away; and now, to his rapt vision, the interior celestial Holy of Holies lies disclosed.

Here, therefore, properly it is that the Philosophy of Clothes attains to Transcendentalism;² this last leap, can we but clear it, takes us safe into the promised land, where *Palingenesia*,³ in all senses, may be considered as beginning. "Courage, then!" may our Diogenes exclaim, with better right than Diogenes the First once did. This stupendous Section we, after long painful meditation, have found not to be unintelligible; but, on the contrary, to grow clear, nay radiant, and all-illuminating. Let the reader, turning on it what utmost force of

¹"Time and Space . . . are not external but internal entities: they have no outward existence; there is no Time and no Space *out* of the mind; they are mere forms of man's spiritual being, laws under which his thinking nature is constituted to act. This seems the hardest conclusion of all, but it is an important one with Kant; and is not given forth as a dogma but carefully deduced in his *Critik der Reinen Vernunft* with great precision and the strictest form of argument." (Carlyle, Essay on Novalis.) In the present chapter, of course, Carlyle speaks rather as a poet and mystic than as a philosopher.

²"The Idealist . . . boasts that his Philosophy is Transcendental, that is 'ascending *beyond* the senses'; which, he asserts, *all* Philosophy, properly so-called, by its nature is and must be." (Carlyle, Essay on Novalis.)

³New birth.

speculative intellect is in him, do his part; as we, by judicious selection and adjustment, shall study to do ours:

"Deep has been, and is, the significance of Miracles," thus quietly begins the Professor; "far deeper perhaps than we imagine. Meanwhile, the question of questions were: What specially is a Miracle? To that Dutch King of Siam, an icicle had been a miracle;⁴ whoso had carried with him an air-pump, and vial of vitriolic ether, might have worked a miracle. To my Horse, again, who unhappily is still more unscientific, do not I work a miracle, and magical '*Open sesame!*'⁵ every time I please to pay twopence, and open for him an impassable *Schlagbaum*, or shut Turnpike?"

"But is not a real Miracle simply a violation of the Laws of Nature?" ask several. Whom I answer by this new question: What are the Laws of Nature? To me perhaps the rising of one from the dead were no violation of these Laws, but a confirmation; were some far deeper Law, now first penetrated into, and by Spiritual Force, even as the rest have all been, brought to bear on us with its Material Force.

"Here too may some inquire, not without astonishment: On what ground shall one, that can make Iron swim,⁶ come and declare that therefore he can teach Religion? To us, truly, of the Nineteenth Century, such declaration were inept enough, which nevertheless to our fathers, of the First Century, was full of meaning.

"But is it not the deepest Law of Nature that she be constant?" cries an illuminated class: 'Is not the Machine of the Universe fixed to move by unalterable rules?' Probable enough, good friends: nay I, too, must believe that the God, whom ancient inspired men assert to be 'without variableness or shadow of turning,'⁷ does indeed never change; that Nature, that the Universe, which no one whom it so pleases can be pre-

⁴"The Indian prince who refused to believe the first relations concerning the effects of frost reasoned justly" (Hume, *Inquiry concerning the Human Understanding*, Sec. x). In this and following paragraphs Carlyle has in mind Hume's discussion of miracles.

⁵The magical words used to open the cave in the story of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" in *The Arabian Nights*.

⁶2 Kings, vi, 6.

⁷St. James, i, 17.

vented from calling a Machine, does move by the most unalterable rules. And now of you, too, I make the old inquiry: What those same unalterable rules, forming the complete Statute-Book of Nature, may possibly be?

"They stand written in our Works of Science, say you; in the accumulated records of Man's Experience?—Was Man with his Experience present at the Creation, then, to see how it all went on? Have any deepest scientific individuals yet dived-down to the foundations of the Universe, and gauged everything there? Did the Maker take them into His counsel;¹ that they read His groundplan of the incomprehensible All; and can say, This stands marked therein, and no more than this? Alas, not in anywise! These scientific individuals have been nowhere but where we also are; have seen some handbreadths deeper than we see into the Deep that is infinite, without bottom as without shore.

"Laplace's Book on the Stars, wherein he exhibits that certain Planets, with their Satellites, gyrate round our worthy Sun, at a rate and in a course, which, by greatest good fortune, he and the like of him have succeeded in detecting,—is to me as precious as to another. But is this what thou namest 'Mechanism of the Heavens,' and 'System of the World'; this, wherein Sirius and the Pleiades, and all Herschel's² Fifteen-thousand Suns per minute, being left out, some paltry handful of Moons, and inert Balls, had been—looked at, nicknamed, and marked in the Zodiacal Way-bill; so that we can now prate of their Whereabout; their How, their Why, their What, being hid from us, as in the signless Inane?

"System of Nature! To the wisest man, wide as is his vision, Nature remains of quite *infinite* depth, of quite infinite expansion; and all Experience thereof limits itself to some few computed centuries and measured square-miles. The course of Nature's phases, on this our little fraction of a Planet, is partially known to us: but who knows what deeper courses these depend on; what infinitely larger Cycle (of causes) our little

Epicycle³ revolves on? To the Minnow every cranny and pebble, and quality and accident, of its little native Creek may have become familiar: but does the Minnow understand the Ocean Tides and periodic Currents, the Trade-winds, and Monsoons, and Moon's Eclipses; by all which the condition of its little Creek is regulated, and may, from time to time (*unmiraculously* enough), be quite overset and reversed? Such a Minnow is Man; his Creek this Planet Earth; his Ocean the immeasurable All; his Monsoons and periodic Currents the mysterious Course of Providence through *Æons* of *Æons*.

"We speak of the Volume of Nature: and truly a Volume it is,—whose Author and Writer is God. To read it! Dost thou, does man, so much as well know the Alphabet thereof? With its Words, Sentences, and grand descriptive Pages, poetical and philosophical, spread out through Solar Systems, and Thousands of Years, we shall not try thee. It is a Volume written in celestial hieroglyphs, in the true Sacred-writing; of which even Prophets are happy that they can read here a line and there a line. As for your Institutes, and Academies of Science, they strive bravely; and, from amid the thick-crowded, inextricably intertwined hieroglyphic writing, pick-out, by dextrous combination, some Letters in the vulgar Character, and therefrom put together this and the other economic Recipe, of high avail in Practice. That Nature is more than some boundless Volume of such Recipes, or huge, well-nigh inexhaustible Domestic-Cookery Book, of which the whole secret will in this manner one day evolve itself, the fewest dream.

"Custom," continues the Professor, "doth make dotards of us all.⁴ Consider well, thou wilt find that Custom is the greatest of Weavers; and weaves air raiment for all the Spirits of the Universe; whereby indeed these dwell with us visibly, as ministering servants, in our houses and workshops; but their spiritual nature becomes, to the most, for ever hidden. Philosophy complains that Custom has hoodwinked us, from the first;

¹See Job, xxxviii, 4-18.

²An English astronomer, of German birth (1738-1822).

³A circle whose center moves round in the circumference of a greater circle.

⁴Cf. *Hamlet*, III, i: "Thus conscience does make cowards of us all."

that we do everything by Custom, even Believe by it; that our very Axioms, let us boast of Free-thinking as we may, are oftenest simply such Beliefs as we have never heard questioned. Nay, what is Philosophy throughout but a continual battle against Custom; an ever-renewed effort to *transcend* the sphere of blind Custom, and so become Transcendental?

"Innumerable are the illusions and legerdemain-tricks of Custom: but of all these, perhaps the cleverest is her knack of persuading us that the Miraculous, by simple repetition, ceases to be Miraculous. True, it is by this means we live; for man must work as well as wonder: and herein is Custom so far a kind nurse, guiding him to his true benefit. But she is a fond foolish nurse, or rather we are false foolish nurslings, when, in our resting and reflecting hours, we prolong the same deception. Am I to view the Stupendous with stupid indifference, because I have seen it twice, or two-hundred, or two-million times? There is no reason in Nature or in Art why I should: unless, indeed, I am a mere Work-Machine, for whom the divine gift of Thought were no other than the terrestrial gift of Steam is to the Steam-engine; a power whereby Cotton might be spun, and money and money's worth realized.

"Notable enough too, here as elsewhere, wilt thou find the potency of Names; which indeed are but one kind of such custom-woven, wonder-hiding Garments. Witchcraft, and all manner of Specter-work, and Demonology, we have now named Madness, and Diseases of the Nerves. Seldom reflecting that still the new question comes upon us: What is Madness, what are Nerves? Ever, as before, does Madness remain a mysterious-terrific, altogether *infernal* boiling-up of the Nether Chaotic Deep, through this fair-painted Vision of Creation, which swims thereon, which we name the Real. Was Luther's Picture of the Devil¹ less a Reality,

¹"In the room of the Wartburg, where he sat translating the Bible, they still show you a black spot on the wall; the strange memorial of one of these conflicts. Luther sat translating one of the Psalms; he was worn-down with long labor, with sickness, abstinence from food: there rose before him some hideous indefinable Image, which he took for the Evil One to forbid his work. Luther started up, with fiend-defiance; flung his inkstand at the specter and it disappeared!"

whether it were formed within the bodily eye, or without it? In every the wisest Soul lies a whole world of internal Madness, an authentic Demon Empire; out of which, indeed, his world of Wisdom has been creatively built together, and now rests there, as on its dark foundations does a habitable flowery Earth-rind.

"But deepest of all illusory Appearances, for hiding Wonder, as for many other ends, are your two grand fundamental world-enveloping Appearances, SPACE and TIME.² These, as spun and woven for us from before Birth itself, to clothe our celestial ME for dwelling here, and yet to blind it,—lie all-embracing, as the universal canvas, or warp and woof, whereby all minor Illusions, in this Phantasm Existence, weave and paint themselves. In Vain, while here on Earth, shall you endeavor to strip them off; you can, at best, but rend them asunder for moments, and look through.

"Fortunatus had a wishing Hat, which when he put on, and wished himself Anywhere, behold he was There. By this means had Fortunatus triumphed over Space, he had annihilated Space;³ for him there was no Where, but all was Here. Were a Hatter to establish himself, in the Wahngasse⁴ of Weissnichtwo, and make felts of this sort for all mankind, what a world we should have of it! Still stranger, should, on the opposite side of the street, another Hatter establish himself; and as his fellow-craftsman made Space-annihilating Hats, make Time-annihilating! Of both would I purchase, were it with my last groschen;⁵ but chiefly of this latter. To clap-on your felt, and, simply by wishing that you were Anywhere, straightway to be *There*! Next to clap-on your other felt, and, simply by wishing that you were Anywhen, straightway to be *Then*! This were indeed the grander: shooting at will

(Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, "The Hero as Priest.") Carlyle hardly answers the difficult question he raises.

²See note at beginning of this chapter.

³Carlyle's instance illustrates the difficulty of triumphing over space, even in thought, as of course Fortunatus did not annihilate space; when he was "there" he was no longer "here." His quickness of movement has really nothing to do with the matter.

⁴Mad Street.

⁵German coin, worth about two cents (not used since 1876).

from the Fire-Creation of the World to its Fire-Consummation; here historically present in the First Century, conversing face to face with Paul and Seneca;¹ there prophetically in the Thirty-first, conversing also face to face with other Pauls and Senecas, who as yet stand hidden in the depth of that late Time!

"Or thinkest thou it were impossible, unimaginable? Is the Past annihilated, then, or only past; is the Future non-extant, or only future? Those mystic faculties of thine, Memory and Hope, already answer: already through those mystic avenues, thou the Earth-blinded summonest both Past and Future, and communest with them, though as yet darkly, and with mute beckonings. The curtains of Yesterday drop down, the curtains of To-morrow roll up; but Yesterday and To-morrow both *are*. Pierce through the Time-element, glance into the Eternal. Believe what thou findest written in the sanctuaries of Man's Soul, even as all Thinkers, in all ages, have devoutly read it there: that Time and Space are not God, but creations of God; that with God as it is a universal HERE, so is it an everlasting NOW.

"And seest thou therein any glimpse of IMMORTALITY?—O Heaven! Is the white Tomb of our Loved One, who died from our arms, and had to be left behind us there, which rises in the distance, like a pale, mournfully receding Milestone, to tell how many toilsome uncheered miles we have journeyed on alone,—but a pale spectral Illusion! Is the lost Friend still mysteriously Here, even as we are Here mysteriously, with God!—Know of a truth that only the Time-shadows have perished, or are perishable; that the real Being of whatever was, and whatever is, and whatever will be, *is* even now and for ever. This, should it unhappily seem new, thou mayest ponder at thy leisure; for the next twenty years, or the next twenty centuries: believe it thou must; understand it thou canst not.

"That the Thought-forms, Space and Time, wherein, once for all, we are sent into this Earth to live, should condition and determine our whole Practical reasonings, conceptions, and imagings or imaginings,—seems altogether fit, just, and unavoidable.

But that they should, furthermore, usurp such sway over pure spiritual Meditation, and blind us to the wonder everywhere lying close on us, seems nowise so. Admit Space and Time to their due rank as Forms of Thought; nay even, if thou wilt, to their quite undue rank of Realities; and consider, then, with thyself how their thin disguises hide from us the brightest God-effulgences! Thus, were it not miraculous, could I stretch forth my hand and clutch the Sun? Yet thou seest me daily stretch forth my hand and therewith clutch many a thing, and swing it hither and thither. Art thou a grown baby, then, to fancy that the Miracle lies in miles of distance, or in pounds avoirdupois of weight; and not to see that the true inexplicable God-revealing Miracle lies in this, that I can stretch forth my hand at all; that I have free Force to clutch aught therewith? Innumerable other of this sort are the deceptions, and wonder-hiding stupefactions, which Space practises on us.

"Still worse is it with regard to Time. Your grand anti-magician, and universal wonder-hider, is this same lying Time. Had we but the Time-annihilating Hat, to put on for once only, we should see ourselves in a World of Miracles, wherein all fabled or authentic Thaumaturgy,² and feats of Magic, were outdone. But unhappily we have not such a Hat; and man, poor fool that he is, can seldom and scantily help himself without one.

"Were it not wonderful, for instance, had Orpheus,³ or Amphion,⁴ built the walls of Thebes by the mere sound of his Lyre? Yet tell me, Who built these walls of Weissnicht-wo; summoning-out all the sandstone rocks, to dance along from the *Steinbruch*⁵ (now a huge Troglodyte⁶ Chasm, with frightful green-mantled pools); and shape themselves into Doric and Ionic pillars, squared ashlar

²Working of miracles.

³Son of Apollo and Calliope. He was Eurydice's husband and descended to Hades, charming its guardians by his music, to rescue her from death.

⁴Son of Zeus and Antiope. Mercury taught him to play on the lyre and, when he became King of Thebes, he charmed stones by his playing to move of their own accord to their places in the wall he was building.

⁵Stone-quarry.

⁶The Troglodytes were cave-dwellers of prehistoric times.

¹They were contemporaries. Seneca (A.D. 4-65) was a Roman philosopher and tutor of Nero.

houses¹ and noble streets? Was it not the still higher Orpheus, or Orpheuses, who, in past centuries, by the divine Music of Wisdom, succeeded in civilizing Man? Our highest Orpheus walked in Judea, eighteen hundred years ago: his sphere-melody, flowing in wild native tones, took captive the ravished souls of men; and, being of a truth sphere-melody, still flows and sounds, though now with thousandfold accompaniments, and rich symphonies, through all our hearts; and modulates, and divinely leads them. Is that a wonder, which happens in two hours; and does it cease to be wonderful if happening in two million? Not only was Thebes built by the music of an Orpheus; but without the music of some inspired Orpheus was no city ever built, no work that man glories-in ever done.

"Sweep away the Illusion of Time; glance, if thou hast eyes, from the near moving-cause to its far-distant Mover:² The stroke that came transmitted through a whole galaxy of elastic balls, was it less a stroke than if the last ball only had been struck, and sent flying? O, could I (with the Time-annihilating Hat) transport thee direct from the Beginnings to the Endings, how were thy eyesight unsealed, and thy heart set flaming in the Light-sea of celestial wonder! Then sawest thou that this fair Universe, were it in the meanest province thereof, is in very deed the star-domed City of God; that through every star, through every grass-blade, and most through every Living Soul, the glory of a present God still beams. But Nature, which is the Time-vesture of God, and reveals Him to the wise, hides Him from the foolish.

"Again, could anything be more miraculous than an actual authentic Ghost? The English Johnson longed, all his life, to see one; but could not, though he went to Cock Lane,³ and thence to the church-vaults, and tapped on coffins. Foolish Doctor! Did he never, with the mind's eye as well as with

the body's, look round him into that full tide of human Life he so loved; did he never so much as look into Himself? The good Doctor was a Ghost, as actual and authentic as heart could wish; well-nigh a million of Ghosts were traveling the streets by his side. Once more I say, sweep away the illusion of Time; compress the threescore years into three minutes:⁴ what else was he, what else are we? Are we not Spirits, that are shaped into a body, into an Appearance; and that fade-away again into air and Invisibility? This is no metaphor, it is a simple scientific *fact*: we start out of Nothingness, take figure, and are Apparitions; round us, as round the veriest specter, is Eternity; and to Eternity minutes are as years and æons. Come there not tones of Love and Faith, as from celestial harp-strings, like the Song of beautified Souls? And again, do not we squeak and gibber⁵ (in our discordant, screech-owlish debates and recriminations); and glide bodeful, and feeble, and fearful; or uproar (*poltern*), and revel in our mad Dance of the Dead,—till the scent of the morning air summons us to our still Home; and dreamy Night becomes awake and Day? Where now is Alexander of Macedon: does the steel Host, that yelled in fierce battle-shouts at Issus and Arbela,⁶ remain behind him; or have they all vanished utterly, even as perturbed Goblins must? Napoleon too, and his Moscow Retreats and Austerlitz Campaigns! Was it all other than the veriest Specter-hunt; which has now, with its howling tumult that made Night hideous, flitted away?—Ghosts! There are nigh a thousand-million walking the Earth openly at noontide; some half-hundred have vanished from it, some half-hundred have arisen in it, ere thy watch ticks once.

"O Heaven, it is mysterious, it is awful to consider that we not only carry each a future Ghost within him; but are, in very deed, Ghosts! These Limbs, whence had we them; this stormy Force; this life-blood with its burning Passion? They are dust and shadow; a Shadow-system gathered round

¹Houses built of hewn stone.

²The First Cause, or God.

³The Cock Lane ghost (really a young girl who deceived the credulous) excited much attention in London in 1762. Dr. Johnson was always anxious for evidence for the supernatural, and took the stories about the ghost seriously enough to make an investigation, after which he concluded the girl to be an impostor.

⁴This, of course, does not touch the problem, which is to conceive of time as non-existent.

⁵*Hamlet*, I, i: "The sheeted dead did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets."

⁶Alexander the Great defeated Darius and the Persians in battles fought at these towns in Asia Minor.

our ME; wherein, through some moments or years, the Divine Essence is to be revealed in the Flesh. That warrior on his strong war-horse, fire flashes through his eyes; force dwells in his arm and heart: but warrior and war-horse are a vision; a revealed Force, nothing more. Stately they tread the Earth, as if it were a firm substance: fool! the Earth is but a film; it cracks in twain, and warrior and war-horse sink beyond plummet's sounding. Plummet's? Fantasy herself will not follow them. A little while ago, they were not; a little while, and they are not, their very ashes are not.

"So has it been from the beginning, so will it be to the end. Generation after generation takes to itself the Form of a Body; and forth-issuing from Cimmerian Night,¹ on Heaven's mission APPEARS. What Force and Fire is in each he expends: one grinding in the mill of Industry; one hunter-like climbing the giddy Alpine heights of Science; one madly dashed in pieces on the rocks of Strife, in war with his fellow:—and then the Heaven-sent is recalled; his earthly Vesture falls away, and soon even to Sense becomes a vanished Shadow. Thus, like some wild-flaming, wild-thundering train of Heaven's Artillery, does this mysterious MANKIND thunder and flame, in long-drawn, quick-succeeding grandeur, through the unknown Deep. Thus, like a God-created, fire-breathing Spirit-host, we emerge from the Inane; haste stormfully across the astonished Earth; then plunge again into the Inane. Earth's mountains are leveled, and her seas filled up, in our passage: can the Earth, which is but dead and a vision, resist Spirits which have reality and are alive? On the hardest adamant some footprint of us is stamped-in; the last Rear of the host will read traces of the earliest Van. But whence?—O Heaven, whither? Sense knows not; Faith knows not; only that it is through Mystery to Mystery, from God and to God.

We are such stuff

As Dreams are made of, and our little Life
Is rounded with a sleep!"²

¹The Cimmerians were a legendary people who dwelt in a land where the sun never shines.

²*Tempest*, IV, i.

CHAPTER IX

CIRCUMSPECTIVE

HERE, then, arises the so momentous question: Have many British Readers actually arrived with us at the new promised country; is the Philosophy of Clothes now at last opening around them? Long and adventurous has the journey been: from those outmost vulgar, palpable Woolen-Hulls of Man; through his wondrous Flesh-Garments, and his wondrous Social Garnitures; inwards to the Garments of his very Soul's Soul, to Time and Space themselves! And now does the spiritual, eternal Essence of Man, and of Mankind, bared of such wrappages, begin in any measure to reveal itself? Can many readers discern, as through a glass darkly, in huge wavering outlines, some primeval rudiments of Man's Being, what is changeable divided from what is unchangeable? Does that Earth-Spirit's speech in *Faust*,—

'Tis thus at the roaring Loom of Time I ply,
And weave for God the Garment thou seest Him
by;³

or that other thousand-times repeated speech of the Magician, Shakespeare,—

And like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloudcapt Towers, the gorgeous Palaces,
The solemn Temples, the great Globe itself,
And all which it inherit, shall dissolve;
And like this unsubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a wrack behind;⁴

begin to have some meaning for us? In a word, do we at length stand safe in the far region of Poetic Creation and Palingenesia, where that Phoenix Death-Birth of Human Society, and of all Human Things, appears possible, is seen to be inevitable?

Along this most insufficient, unheard-of Bridge, which the Editor, by Heaven's

³*Goethe's Faust*. The whole passage, as quoted by Carlyle elsewhere in *Sartor*, is:

"In Being's floods, in Action's storm,
I walk and work, above, beneath,
Work and weave in endless motion!

Birth and Death,
An infinite ocean;
A seizing and giving
The fire of Living:

'Tis thus at the roaring Loom of Time I ply,
And weave for God the Garment thou seest Him by."
(Spoken by the Earth-Spirit.)

⁴*Tempest*, IV, i.

blessing, has now seen himself enabled to conclude if not complete, it cannot be his sober calculation, but only his fond hope, that many have traveled without accident. No firm arch, overspanning the Impassable with paved highway, could the Editor construct; only, as was said,¹ some zigzag series of rafts floating tumultuously thereon. Alas, and the leaps from raft to raft were too often of a breakneck character; the darkness, the nature of the element, all was against us!

Nevertheless, may not here and there one of a thousand, provided with a discursiveness of intellect rare in our day, have cleared the passage, in spite of all? Happy few! little band of Friends! be welcome, be of courage. By degrees, the eye grows accustomed to its new Whereabout; the hand can stretch itself forth to work there: it is in this grand and indeed highest work of Paligenesia that ye shall labor, each according to ability. New laborers will arrive; new Bridges will be built; nay, may not our own poor rope-and-raft Bridge, in your passings and repassings, be mended in many a point, till it grow quite firm, passable even for the halt?

Meanwhile, of the innumerable multitude that started with us, joyous and full of hope, where now is the innumerable remainder, whom we see no longer by our side? The most have recoiled, and stand gazing afar off, in unsympathetic astonishment, at our career: not a few, pressing forward with more courage, have missed footing, or leaped short; and now swim weltering in the Chaos-flood, some towards this shore, some towards that. To these also a helping hand should be held out; at least some word of encouragement be said.

Or, to speak without metaphor, with which mode of utterance Teufelsdröckh unhappily has somewhat infected us,—can it be hidden from the Editor that many a British Reader sits reading quite bewildered in head, and afflicted rather than instructed by the present Work? Yes, long ago has many a British Reader been, as now, demanding with something like a snarl: Whereto does all this lead; or what use is in it?

In the way of replenishing thy purse, or otherwise aiding thy digestive faculty, O

British Reader, it leads to nothing, and there is no use in it; but rather the reverse, for it costs thee somewhat. Nevertheless, if through this unpromising Horn-gate,² Teufelsdröckh, and we by means of him, have led thee into the true Land of Dreams; and through the Clothes-screen, as through a magical *Pierre-Pertuis*,³ thou lookest, even for moments, into the region of the Wonderful, and seest and feelest that thy daily life is girt with Wonder, and based on Wonder, and thy very blankets and breeches are Miracles,—then art thou profited beyond money's worth; and hast a thankfulness towards our Professor; nay, perhaps in many a literary Tea-circle wilt open thy kind lips, and audibly express that same.

Nay, farther, art not thou too perhaps by this time made aware that all Symbols are properly Clothes; that all Forms whereby Spirit manifests itself to sense, whether outwardly or in the imagination, are Clothes; and thus not only the parchment *Magna Charta*,⁴ which a Tailor was nigh cutting into measures, but the Pomp and Authority of Law, the sacredness of Majesty, and all inferior Worships (Worthships) are properly a Vesture and Raiment; and the Thirty-nine Articles⁵ themselves are articles of wearing-apparel (for the Religious Idea)? In which case, must it not also be admitted that this Science of Clothes is a high one, and may with infinitely deeper study on thy part yield richer fruit: that it takes scientific rank beside Codification,⁶ and Political Economy, and the Theory of the British Constitution; nay rather, from its prophetic height looks down on all these, as on so many weaving-shops and spinning-mills, where the Vestures which *it* has to fashion, and consecrate and distribute, are, too often by haggard hungry

²See *Æneid*, VI, 893 and following lines.

³In the Bernese Alps; a natural opening in the rock between Tavannes and Sanchoz.

⁴The Charter granted by King John at Runnymede, 15 June, 1215. The story Carlyle alludes to is that Sir Robert Cotton (1571-1631), the antiquary, one day found his tailor about to cut up the charter. Cotton bought the document, which is now in the British Museum.

⁵Articles of belief, in the Anglican Church.

⁶The process of reducing laws to a systematic body. The allusion is to Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), whose Utilitarianism was at the time dominant in English thought and a force in practical politics.

¹In an earlier chapter, here omitted.

operatives who see no farther than their nose, mechanically woven and spun?

But omitting all this, much more all that concerns Natural Supernaturalism, and indeed whatever has reference to the Ulterior or Transcendental portion of the Science, or bears never so remotely on that promised Volume of the *Palingenesie der menschlichen Gesellschaft* (Newbirth of Society),—we humbly suggest that no province of Clothes-Philosophy, even the lowest, is without its direct value, but that innumerable inferences of a practical nature may be drawn therefrom. To say nothing of those pregnant considerations, ethical, political, symbolical, which crowd on the Clothes-Philosopher from the very threshold of his Science; nothing even of those “architectural ideas,”¹ which, as we have seen, lurk at the bottom of all Modes, and will one day, better unfolding themselves, lead to important revolutions,—let us glance for a moment, and with the faintest light of Clothes-Philosophy, on what may be called the Hablatory Class of our fellow-men. Here too overlooking, where so much were to be looked on, the million spinners, weavers, fullers, dyers, washers, and wringers, that puddle and mud-dle in their dark recesses, to make us Clothes, and die that we may live,—let us but turn the reader’s attention upon two small divisions of mankind, who, like moths, may be regarded as Cloth-animals, creatures that live, move, and have their being in Cloth: we mean, Dandies² and Tailors.

In regard to both which small divisions it may be asserted without scruple, that the public feeling, unenlightened by Philosophy, is at fault; and even that the dictates

of humanity are violated. As will perhaps abundantly appear to readers of the two following chapters.

CHAPTER X

THE DANDIACAL BODY

FIRST, touching Dandies, let us consider, with some scientific strictness, what a Dandy specially is. A Dandy is a Clothes-wearing Man, a Man whose trade, office, and existence consists in the wearing of Clothes. Every faculty of his soul, spirit, purse, and person is heroically consecrated to this one object, the wearing of Clothes wisely and well: so that as others dress to live, he lives to dress. The all-importance of Clothes, which a German Professor, of unequalled learning and acumen, writes his enormous Volume to demonstrate, has sprung up in the intellect of the Dandy without effort, like an instinct of genius; he is inspired with Cloth, a Poet of Cloth. What Teufelsdröckh would call a “Divine Idea of Cloth” is born with him; and this, like other such Ideas, will express itself outwardly, or wring his heart asunder with unutterable throes.

But, like a generous, creative enthusiast, he fearlessly makes his Idea an Action; shows himself in peculiar guise to mankind; walks forth, a witness and living Martyr to the eternal worth of Clothes. We called him a Poet: is not his body the (stuffed) parchment-skin whereon he writes, with cunning Huddersfield dyes, a Sonnet to his mistress’ eyebrow?³ Say, rather, an Epos, and *Clotha Virumque cano*,⁴ to the whole world, in Macaronic verses,⁵ which he that runs may read. Nay, if you grant, what seems to be admissible, that the Dandy has a Thinking-principle in him, and some notions of Time and Space, is there not in this Life-devotedness to Cloth, in this so willing sacrifice of the Immortal to the Perishable, something (though in reverse order) of that blending and identification of Eternity with

¹“Neither in tailoring nor in legislating does man proceed by mere Accident, but the hand is ever guided on by mysterious operations of the mind. In all his Modes, and hablatory endeavors, an Architectural Idea will be found lurking; his Body and the Cloth are the site and materials whereon and whereby his beautiful edifice, of a Person, is to be built. Whether he flow gracefully out in folded mantles, based on light sandals; tower-up in high head-gear, from amid peaks, spangles, and bell-girdles; swell-out in starched ruffs, buckram stuffings, and monstrous tuberosities; or girth himself into separate sections, and front the world an Agglomeration of four limbs,—will depend on the nature of such architectural Idea: whether Grecian, Gothic, Later-Gothic or altogether Modern, and Parisian or Anglo-dandiactal.” (*Sartor*, Bk. I, ch. v.)

²The period of the dandies in London society was from about 1813 to 1830.

³*As You Like It*, II, vii:

“And then the lover
Sighing like a furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress’ eyebrow.”

⁴The first line of the *Æneid* begins, *Arma virumque cano*.

⁵Verses written in a mixture of Latin and vernacular words. Macaroni was also a name applied to English dandies in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

Time, which, as we have seen, constitutes the Prophetic character?

And now, for all this perennial Martyrdom, and Poesy, and even Prophecy, what is it that the Dandy asks in return? Solely, we may say, that you would recognize his existence; would admit him to be a living object; or even failing this, a visual object, or thing that will reflect rays of light. Your silver or your gold (beyond what the niggardly Law has already secured him) he solicits not; simply the glance of your eyes. Understand his mystic significance, or altogether miss and misinterpret it; do but look at him, and he is contented. May we not well cry shame on an ungrateful world, which refuses even this poor boon; which will waste its optic faculty on dried Crocodiles, and Siamese Twins; and over the domestic wonderful wonder of wonders, a live Dandy, glance with hasty indifference, and a scarcely concealed contempt! Him no Zoologist classes among the Mammalia, no Anatomist dissects with care: when did we see any injected Preparation of the Dandy in our Museums; any specimen of him preserved in spirits? Lord Herringbone may dress himself in a snuff-brown suit, with snuff-brown shirt and shoes: it skills¹ not; the undiscerning public, occupied with grosser wants, passes by regardless on the other side.

The age of Curiosity, like that of Chivalry, is indeed, properly speaking, gone. Yet perhaps only gone to sleep: for here arises the Clothes-Philosophy to resuscitate, strangely enough, both the one and the other! Should sound views of this Science come to prevail, the essential nature of the British Dandy, and the mystic significance that lies in him, cannot always remain hidden under laughable and lamentable hallucination. The following long Extract from Professor Teufelsdröckh may set the matter, if not in its true light, yet in the way towards such. It is to be regretted, however, that here, as so often elsewhere, the Professor's keen philosophic perspicacity is somewhat marred by a certain mixture of almost owlish purblindness, or else of some perverse, ineffectual, ironic tendency; our readers shall judge which:

"In these distracted times," writes he,

"when the Religious Principle, driven-out of most Churches, either lies unseen in the hearts of good men, looking and longing and silently working there towards some new Revelation; or else wanders homeless over the world, like a disembodied soul seeking its terrestrial organization,—into how many strange shapes, of Superstition and Fanaticism, does it not tentatively and errantly cast itself! The higher Enthusiasm of man's nature is for the while without Exponent; yet does it continue indestructible, unweariedly active, and work blindly in the great chaotic deep: thus Sect after Sect, and Church after Church bodies itself forth, and melts again into new metamorphosis.

"Chiefly is this observable in England, which, as the wealthiest and worst-instructed of European nations, offers precisely the elements (of Heat, namely, and of Darkness), in which such moon-calves and monstrosities are best generated. Among the newer Sects of that country, one of the most notable, and closely connected with our present subject, is that of the *Dandies*; concerning which, what little information I have been able to procure may fitly stand here.

"It is true, certain of the English Journalists, men generally without sense for the Religious Principle, or judgment for its manifestations, speak, in their brief enigmatic notices, as if this were perhaps rather a Secular Sect, and not a Religious one; nevertheless, to the psychologic eye its devotional and even sacrificial character plainly enough reveals itself. Whether it belongs to the class of Fetish-worships, or of Hero-worships or Polytheisms, or to what other class, may in the present state of our intelligence remain undecided (*schweben*). A certain touch of Manicheism,² not indeed in the Gnostic³ shape, is discernible enough: also (for human Error walks in a cycle, and reappears at intervals) a not-inconsiderable resemblance to that Superstition of the Athos Monks,⁴ who by fasting from all nourish-

²Recognition of two opposed powers in the world, manifesting themselves variously as light and darkness, good and evil, spirit and matter; so named from Mani, or Manes, a Persian.

³Because the Gnostics stressed the impurity of matter and the degradation of the body and so would have condemned the creed of the dandy.

⁴Mount Athos is in Macedonia. Monasteries have been there from earliest Christian times.

¹Matters.

ment, and looking intensely for a length of time into their own navels, came to discern therein the true Apocalypse of Nature, and Heaven Unveiled. To my own surmise, it appears as if this Dandiacal Sect were but a new modification, adapted to the new time, of that primeval Superstition, *Self-worship*; which Zerdusht,¹ Quangfoutchee,² Mohamed, and others, strove rather to subordinate and restrain than to eradicate; and which only in the purer forms of Religion has been altogether rejected. Wherefore, if any one chooses to name it revived Ahri-manism,³ or a new figure of Demon-Worship, I have, so far as is yet visible, no objection.

"For the rest, these people, animated with the zeal of a new Sect, display courage and perseverance, and what force there is in man's nature, though never so enslaved. They affect great purity and separatism; distinguish themselves by a particular costume (whereof some notices were given in the earlier part of this Volume); likewise, so far as possible, by a particular speech (apparently some broken *Lingua-franca*,⁴ or English-French); and, on the whole, strive to maintain a true Nazarene⁵ deportment, and keep themselves unspotted from the world.

"They have their Temples, whereof the chief, as the Jewish Temple did, stands in their metropolis; and is named *Almack's*,⁶ a word of uncertain etymology. They worship principally by night; and have their Highpriests and Highpriestesses, who, however, do not continue for life. The rites, by some supposed to be of the Menadic⁷ sort,

¹Zarathustra, or Zoroaster, founder of the Persian religion which is called by his name.

²Confucius, an ethical teacher rather than the founder of a religion.

³Ahriman was the principle of darkness and evil in the dualism of Zoroaster.

⁴A bastard or hybrid language used by European travelers in the lands at the eastern end of the Mediterranean. Carlyle uses the term in allusion to the habit, fashionable at the time, of using many French terms in English speech.

⁵Native of Nazareth. Carlyle has probably confused the word with Nazarene, the name applied to a Jew living under certain strict vows.

⁶A famous club, or suite of assembly rooms, where fashionable people gathered.

⁷Belonging to the Mænads, attendants on Bacchus.

or perhaps with an Eleusinian⁸ or Cabiric⁹ character, are held strictly secret. Nor are Sacred Books wanting to the Sect; these they call *Fashionable Novels*: however, the Canon is not completed, and some are canonical and others not.

"Of such Sacred Books I, not without expense, procured myself some samples; and in hope of true insight, and with the zeal which befits an Inquirer into Clothes, set to interpret and study them. But wholly to no purpose: that tough faculty of reading, for which the world will not refuse me credit, was here for the first time foiled and set at naught. In vain that I summoned my whole energies (*mich weidlich anstrengte*), and did my very utmost; at the end of some short space, I was uniformly seized with not so much what I can call a drumming in my ears, as a kind of infinite, unsufferable, Jew's-harping and scrannel-piping¹⁰ there; to which the frightfullest species of Magnetic Sleep soon supervened. And if I strove to shake this away, and absolutely would not yield, there came a hitherto unfelt sensation, as of *Delirium Tremens*, and a melting into total deliquium:¹¹ till at last, by order of the Doctor, dreading ruin to my whole intellectual and bodily faculties, and a general breaking-up of the constitution, I reluctantly but determinedly forbore. Was there some miracle at work here; like those Fire-balls, and supernal and infernal prodigies, which, in the case of the Jewish Mysteries, have also more than once scared-back the Alien? Be this as it may, such failure on my part, after best efforts, must excuse the imperfection of this sketch; altogether incomplete, yet the completest I could give of a Sect too singular to be omitted.

"Loving my own life and senses as I do, no power shall induce me, as a private individual, to open another *Fashionable Novel*. But luckily, in this dilemma, comes a hand from the clouds; whereby if not victory, deliverance is held out to me. Round one of those Book-packages, which the *Still-schweigen'sche Buchhandlung*¹² is in the habit

⁸The Eleusinian mysteries were celebrated at Eleusis in Attica.

⁹The Cabiri were deities worshiped chiefly in Samothrace.

¹⁰See Milton, *Lycidas*, l. 124.

¹¹Liquefaction. ¹²Bookshop.

of importing from England, come, as is usual, various waste printed-sheets (*Maculatur-blätter*), by way of interior wrappage: into these the Clothes-Philosopher, with a certain Mohamedan reverence even for waste-paper,¹ where curious knowledge will sometimes hover, disdains not to cast his eye. Readers may judge of his astonishment when on such a defaced stray-sheet, probably the outcast fraction of some English Periodical, such as they name *Magazine*, appears something like a Dissertation on this very subject of *Fashionable Novels*! It sets out, indeed, chiefly from a Secular point of view; directing itself, not without asperity, against some to me unknown individual named *Pelham*,² who seems to be a Mystagogue, and leading Teacher and Preacher of the Sect; so that, what indeed otherwise was not to be expected in such a fugitive fragmentary sheet, the true secret, the Religious physiognomy and physiology of the Dandiacal Body, is nowise laid fully open there. Nevertheless, scattered lights do from time to time sparkle out, whereby I have endeavored to profit. Nay, in one passage selected from the Prophecies, or Mythic Theogonies, or whatever they are (for the style seems very mixed) of this Mystagogue, I find what appears to be a Confession of Faith, or Whole Duty of Man, according to the tenets of that Sect. Which Confession or Whole Duty, therefore, as proceeding from a source so authentic, I shall here arrange under Seven distinct Articles, and in very abridged shape lay before the German world; therewith taking leave of this matter. Observe also, that to avoid possibility of error, I, as far as may be, quote literally from the Original:

ARTICLES OF FAITH

1. Coats should have nothing of the triangle about them; at the same time, wrinkles behind should be carefully avoided.
2. The collar is a very important point: it should be low behind, and slightly rolled.

¹"It is the custom of the Mahometans, if they see any printed or written paper on the ground, to take it up and lay it aside carefully, as not knowing but it may contain some piece of their Alcoran."—*Spectator*, No. 85 (MacMechan).

²The title of a novel by Bulwer Lytton, published 1828. Passages resembling those which here follow may be found particularly in Chapters 44 and 46.

3. No license of fashion can allow a man of delicate taste to adopt the posterial luxuriance of a Hottentot.

4. There is safety in a swallow-tail.

5. The good sense of a gentleman is nowhere more finely developed than in his rings.

6. It is permitted to mankind, under certain restrictions, to wear white waistcoats.

7. The trousers must be exceedingly tight across the hips.

"All which Propositions I, for the present, content myself with modestly but peremptorily and irrevocably denying.

"In strange contrast with this Dandiacal Body stands another British Sect, originally, as I understand, of Ireland, where its chief seat still is; but known also in the main Island, and indeed everywhere rapidly spreading. As this Sect has hitherto emitted no Canonical Books, it remains to me in the same state of obscurity as the Dandiacal, which has published Books that the unassisted human faculties are inadequate to read. The members appear to be designated by a considerable diversity of names, according to their various places of establishment: in England they are generally called the *Drudge* Sect; also, unphilosophically enough, the *White Negroes*; and, chiefly in scorn by those of other communions, the *Ragged-Beggar* Sect. In Scotland, again, I find them entitled *Hallanshakers*,³ or the *Stook of Duds* Sect; any individual communicant is named *Stook of Duds* (that is, Shock of Rags), in allusion, doubtless, to their professional Costume. While in Ireland, which, as mentioned, is their grand parent hive, they go by a perplexing multiplicity of designations, such as *Bogtrotters*, *Redshanks*, *Ribbonmen*, *Cottiers*, *Peep-of-Day Boys*, *Babes of the Wood*, *Rockites*, *Poor-Slaves*;⁴ which last, however, seems to be the primary and generic name; whereto, probably enough, the others are only subsidiary species, or slight varieties; or, at most, propagated offsets from the parent stem, whose minute subdivisions, and shades of difference, it were here loss of time to dwell on. Enough for us to understand, what seems indubitable, that the original Sect is that of the *Poor-Slaves*; whose doctrines, practices,

³Sturdy beggars.

⁴All names given to the poor and rebellious Irish in the early nineteenth century.

and fundamental characteristics pervade and animate the whole Body, howsoever denominated or outwardly diversified.

"The precise speculative tenets of this Brotherhood: how the Universe, and Man, and Man's Life, picture themselves to the mind of an Irish Poor-Slave; with what feelings and opinions he looks forward on the Future, round on the Present, back on the Past, it were extremely difficult to specify. Something Monastic there appears to be in their Constitution: we find them bound by the two Monastic Vows, of Poverty and Obedience; which Vows, especially the former, it is said, they observe with great strictness; nay, as I have understood it, they are pledged, and be it by any solemn Nazarene ordination or not, irrevocably consecrated thereto, even *before birth*. That the third Monastic Vow, of Chastity, is rigidly enforced among them, I find no ground to conjecture.

"Furthermore, they appear to imitate the Dandiacal Sect in their grand principle of wearing a peculiar Costume. Of which Irish Poor-Slave Costume no description will indeed be found in the present Volume; for this reason, that by the imperfect organ of Language it did not seem describable. Their raiment consists of innumerable skirts, lappets¹ and irregular wings, of all cloths and of all colors; through the labyrinthic intricacies of which their bodies are introduced by some unknown process. It is fastened together by a multiplex combination of buttons, thrums² and skewers; to which frequently is added a girdle of leather, of hempen or even of straw rope, round the loins. To straw rope, indeed, they seem partial, and often wear it by way of sandals. In head-dress they affect a certain freedom: hats with partial brim, without crown, or with only a loose, hinged, or valve crown; in the former case, they sometimes invert the hat, and wear it brim uppermost, like a University-cap, with what view is unknown.

"The name Poor-Slaves seems to indicate a Slavonic, Polish, or Russian origin: not so, however, the interior essence and spirit of their Superstition, which rather displays a Teutonic or Druidical character. One might

fancy them worshipers of Hertha,³ or the Earth: for they dig and affectionately work continually in her bosom; or else, shut-up in private Oratories,⁴ meditate and manipulate the substances derived from her; seldom looking-up towards the Heavenly Luminaries, and then with comparative indifference. Like the Druids, on the other hand, they live in dark dwellings; often even breaking their glass-windows, where they find such, and stuffing them up with pieces of raiment, or other opaque substances, till the fit obscurity is restored. Again, like all followers of Nature-Worship, they are liable to out-breakings of an enthusiasm rising to ferocity; and burn men, if not in wicker idols, yet in sod cottages.

"In respect of diet, they have also their observances. All Poor-Slaves are Rhizophagous (or Root-eaters); a few are Ichthyophagous,⁵ and use Salted Herrings: other animal food they abstain from; except indeed, with perhaps some strange inverted fragment of a Brahminical feeling, such animals as die a natural death.⁶ Their universal sustenance is the root named Potato, cooked by fire alone; and generally without condiment or relish of any kind, save an unknown condiment named *Point*, into the meaning of which I have vainly inquired; the victual *Potatoes-and-Point*⁷ not appearing, at least not with specific accuracy of description, in any European Cookery-Book whatever. For drink, they use, with an almost epigrammatic counterpoise of taste, Milk, which is the mildest of liquors, and *Potheon*,⁸ which is the fiercest. This latter I have tasted, as well as the English *Blue-Ruin*, and the Scotch *Whisky*, analogous fluids used by the Sect in those countries: it evidently contains some form of alcohol, in the highest state of concentration, though disguised with acrid oils; and is, on the whole, the most pungent substance known to me,—indeed, a perfect liquid fire. In all their Religious Solemnities, *Potheon* is said to

³Germanic goddess of fertility, mentioned by Tacitus.

⁴Factories. ⁵Fish-eaters.

⁶The Brahmins do not permit themselves to kill any animals or insects.

⁷*I.e.*, potatoes and nothing besides; bacon or herring, if there was any, being simply pointed at, not eaten, because there was not enough to go round.

⁸"Moonshine" whisky.

¹Folds.

²Loose threads.

be an indispensable requisite, and largely consumed.

"An Irish Traveler, of perhaps common veracity, who presents himself under the to me unmeaning title of *The late John Bernard*, offers the following sketch¹ of a domestic establishment, the inmates whereof, though such is not stated expressly, appear to have been of that Faith. Thereby shall my German readers now behold an Irish Poor-Slave, as it were with their own eyes; and even see him at meat. Moreover, in the so precious waste-paper sheet above mentioned, I have found some corresponding picture of a Dandiacal Household, painted by that same Dandiacal Mystagogue, or Theogonist: this also, by way of counterpart and contrast, the world shall look into.

"First, therefore, of the Poor-Slave, who appears likewise to have been a species of Innkeeper. I quote from the original:

POOR-SLAVE HOUSEHOLD

The furniture of this Caravansera consisted of a large iron Pot, two oaken Tables, two Benches, two Chairs, and a Potheen Noggin.² There was a Loft above (attainable by a ladder), upon which the inmates slept; and the space below was divided by a hurdle into two Apartments; the one for their cow and pig, the other for themselves and guests. On entering the house we discovered the family, eleven in number, at dinner: the father sitting at the top, the mother at the bottom, the children on each side, of a large oaken Board, which was scooped-out in the middle, like a trough, to receive the contents of their Pot of Potatoes. Little holes were cut at equal distances to contain Salt; and a bowl of Milk stood on the table: all the luxuries of meat and beer, bread, knives, and dishes were dispensed with.

The Poor-Slave himself our Traveler found, as he says, broad-backed, black-browed, of great personal strength, and mouth from ear to ear. His Wife was a sun-browned but well-featured woman; and his young ones, bare and chubby, had the appetite of ravens. Of their Philosophical or Religious tenets or observances, no notice or hint.

"But now, secondly, of the Dandiacal Household; in which, truly, that often-men-

tional Mystagogue and inspired Penman himself has his abode:

DANDIACAL HOUSEHOLD

A Dressing-room splendidly furnished; violet-colored curtains, chairs and ottomans of the same hue. Two full-length Mirrors are placed, one on each side of a table, which supports the luxuries of the Toilet. Several Bottles of Perfumes, arranged in a peculiar fashion, stand upon a smaller table of mother-of-pearl: opposite to these are placed the appurtenances of Lavation richly wrought in frosted silver. A wardrobe of Buhl³ is on the left; the doors of which, being partly open, discover a profusion of Clothes; Shoes of a singularly small size monopolize the lower shelves. Fronting the wardrobe a door ajar gives some slight glimpse of a Bathroom. Folding-doors in the background.—Enter the Author [our Theogonist in person] obsequiously preceded by a French Valet, in white silk Jacket and cambric Apron.⁴

"Such are the two Sects which, at this moment, divide the more unsettled portion of the British People; and agitate that ever-vexed country. To the eye of the political Seer, their mutual relation, pregnant with the elements of discord and hostility, is far from consoling. These two principles of Dandiacal Self-worship or Demon-worship, and Poor-Slavish or Drudgical Earth-worship, or whatever that same Drudgism may be, do as yet indeed manifest themselves under distant and nowise considerable shapes: nevertheless, in their roots and subterranean ramifications, they extend through the entire structure of Society, and work unweariedly in the secret depths of English national Existence; striving to separate and isolate it into two contradictory, uncommunicating masses.

"In numbers, and even individual strength, the Poor-Slaves or Drudges, it would seem, are hourly increasing. The Dandiacal, again, is by nature no proselytizing Sect; but it boasts of great hereditary resources, and is strong by union; whereas the Drudges, split into parties, have as yet no rallying-point; or at best only co-operate by means of partial secret affiliations. If, indeed, there were to arise a *Communion of Drudges*, as there is already a *Communion*

¹Condensed from several paragraphs (Vol. I, pp. 348-350) in *Retrospections of the Stage* by John Bernard, published in 1830.

²Small mug.

³Cabinetwork inlaid with tortoise-shell or metal.

⁴Quoted, with a few minor changes, from the introduction to Bulwer Lytton's novel, *The Disowned*.

of Saints, what strangest effects would follow therefrom! Dandyism as yet affects to look-down on Drudgism: but perhaps the hour of trial, when it will be practically seen which ought to look down, and which up, is not so distant.

"To me it seems probable that the two Sects will one day part England between them; each recruiting itself from the intermediate ranks, till there be none left to enlist on either side. Those Dandiacal Manicheans, with the host of Dandysing Christians, will form one body: the Drudges, gathering round them whosoever is Drudgical, be he Christian or Infidel Pagan; sweeping-up likewise all manner of Utilitarians, Radicals, refractory Potwallopers,¹ and so forth, into their general mass, will form another. I could liken Dandyism and Drudgism to two bottomless boiling Whirlpools that had broken-out on opposite quarters of the firm land: as yet they appear only disquieted, foolishly bubbling wells, which man's art might cover-in; yet mark them, their diameter is daily widening: they are hollow Cones that boil-up from the infinite Deep, over which your firm land is but a thin crust or rind! Thus daily is the intermediate land crumbling-in, daily the empire of the two Buchan-Bullers² extending; till now there is but a foot-plank, a mere film of Land between them; this too is washed away: and then—we have the true Hell of Waters, and Noah's Deluge is outdeluged!

"Or better, I might call them two boundless, and indeed unexampled Electric Machines (turned by the "Machinery of Society"), with batteries of opposite quality; Drudgism the Negative, Dandyism the Positive: one attracts hourly towards it and appropriates all the Positive Electricity of the nation (namely, the Money thereof); the other is equally busy with the Negative (that is to say the Hunger), which is equally potent. Hitherto you see only partial transient sparkles and sputters: but wait a little, till the entire nation is in an electric

state; till your whole vital Electricity, no longer healthfully Neutral, is cut into two isolated portions of Positive and Negative (of Money and of Hunger); and stands there bottled-up in two World-Batteries! The stirring of a child's finger brings the two together; and then—What then? The Earth is but shivered into impalpable smoke by that Doom's-thunderpeal; the Sun misses one of his Planets in Space, and thenceforth there are no eclipses of the Moon.—Or better still, I might liken"—

Oh! enough, enough of likenings and similitudes; in excess of which, truly, it is hard to say whether Teufelsdröckh or ourselves sin the more.

We have often blamed him for a habit of wire-drawing and over-refining; from of old we have been familiar with his tendency to Mysticism and Religiosity, whereby in everything he was still scenting-out Religion: but never perhaps did these amaurosis-suffusions³ so cloud and distort his otherwise most piercing vision, as in this of the *Dandiacal Body*! Or was there something of intended satire; is the Professor and Seer not quite the blinkard he affects to be? Of an ordinary mortal we should have decisively answered in the affirmative; but with a Teufelsdröckh there ever hovers some shade of doubt. In the mean while, if satire were actually intended, the case is little better. There are not wanting men who will answer: Does your Professor take us for simpletons? His irony has overshot itself; we see through it, and perhaps through him.

CHAPTER XI

TAILORS

THUS, however, has our first Practical Inference from the Clothes-Philosophy, that which respects Dandies, been sufficiently drawn; and we come now to the second, concerning Tailors. On this latter our opinion happily quite coincides with that of Teufelsdröckh himself, as expressed in the concluding page of his Volume, to whom, therefore, we willingly give place. Let him speak his own last words, in his own way:

"Upwards of a century," says he, "must elapse, and still the bleeding fight of Freedom

¹One who boils a pot, *i.e.*, who prepares his own food. The name was applied to a certain class of voters in England before the passage of the Reform Bill of 1832—those who had resided in a borough for six months and had not been given poor-relief for twelve.

²The name of a well, or whirlpool enclosed in a rocky recess, six miles south of Peterhead on the Aberdeen-shire coast.

³Amaurosis is a form of blindness.

be fought, whoso is noblest perishing in the van, and thrones be hurled on altars like Pelion on Ossa,¹ and the Moloch² of Iniquity have his victims, and the Michael of Justice his martyrs, before Tailors can be admitted to their true prerogatives of manhood, and this last wound of suffering Humanity be closed.

"If aught in the history of the world's blindness could surprise us, here might we indeed pause and wonder. An idea has gone abroad, and fixed itself down into a widespreading rooted error, that Tailors are a distinct species in Physiology, not Men, but fractional Parts of a Man.³ Call any one a *Schneider* (Cutter, Tailor), is it not, in our dislocated, hoodwinked, and indeed delirious condition of Society, equivalent to defying his perpetual fellest enmity? The epithet *schneider-mässig* (tailor-like) betokens an otherwise unapproachable degree of pusillanimity: we introduce a *Tailor's-Melancholy*,⁴ more opprobrious than any Leprosy, into our Books of Medicine; and fable I know not what of his generating it by living on Cabbage. Why should I speak of Hans Sachs⁵ (himself a Shoemaker, or kind of Leather-Tailor), with his *Schneider mit dem Panier*?⁶ Why of Shakespeare, in his *Taming of the Shrew*, and elsewhere? Does it not stand on record that the English Queen Elizabeth, receiving a deputation of Eighteen Tailors, addressed them with a 'Good morning, gentlemen both!' Did not the same virago boast that she had a Cavalry Regiment, whereof neither horse nor man could be injured; her Regiment, namely, of Tailors on Mares? Thus everywhere is the falsehood taken for granted, and acted-on as an indisputable fact.

"Nevertheless, need I put the question to any Physiologist, whether it is disputable or not? Seems it not at least presumable,

¹Mountains in Thessaly, the former of which the Titans were fabled to have piled on the latter in an effort to reach the abode of the gods.

²God of the Ammonites who was worshiped with human sacrifices.

³According to a proverb of uncertain origin, "nine tailors make a man."

⁴See Lamb's essay *On the Melancholy of Tailors*. Lamb discusses the influence of cabbage.

⁵German poet and Meistersinger (1494-1576).

⁶Tailor with the Flag.

that, under his Clothes, the Tailor has bones and viscera, and other muscles than the sartorius? Which function of manhood is the Tailor not conjectured to perform? Can he not arrest for debt? Is he not in most countries a tax-paying animal?

"To no reader of this Volume can it be doubtful which conviction is mine. Nay if the fruit of these long vigils, and almost preternatural Inquiries, is not to perish utterly, the world will have approximated towards a higher Truth; and the doctrine, which Swift,⁷ with the keen forecast of genius, dimly anticipated, will stand revealed in clear light: that the Tailor is not only a Man, but something of a Creator or Divinity. Of Franklin it was said, that 'he snatched the Thunder from Heaven and the Scepter from Kings';⁸ but which is greater, I would ask, he that lends, or he that snatches? For, looking away from individual cases, and how a Man is by the Tailor new-created into a Nobleman, and clothed not only with Wool but with Dignity and a Mystic Dominion,—is not the fair fabric of Society itself, with all its royal mantles and pontifical stoles, whereby, from nakedness and dismemberment, we are organized into Politics, into nations, and a whole co-operating Mankind, the creation, as has here been often irrefragably evinced, of the Tailor alone?—What too are all Poets and moral Teachers, but a species of Metaphorical Tailors? Touching which high Guild the greatest living Guild-brother has triumphantly asked us: 'Nay if thou wilt have it, who but the Poet first made Gods for men; brought them down to us; and raised us up to them?'⁹

"And this is he, whom sitting downcast, on the hard basis of his Shopboard, the world treats with contumely, as the ninth part of a man! Look up, thou much-injured one, look up with the kindling eye of hope, and prophetic bodings of a noble better time. Too long hast thou sat there, on crossed legs, wearing thy ankle-joints to horn; like some sacred Anchorite, or Catholic Fakir, doing penance, drawing down Heaven's richest blessings, for a world that scoffed at

⁷See *A Tale of a Tub*, Sec. II. This probably suggested to Carlyle the idea of writing a philosophy of clothes.

⁸This is ascribed to Turgot.

⁹Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, ii, 2.

thee. Be of hope! Already streaks of blue peer through our clouds; the thick gloom of Ignorance is rolling asunder, and it will be Day. Mankind will repay with interest their long-accumulated debt: the Anchorite that was scoffed at will be worshiped; the Fraction will become not an Integer only, but a Square and Cube. With astonishment the world will recognize that the Tailor is its Hierophant and Hierarch, or even its God.

"As I stood in the Mosque of St. Sophia,¹ and looked upon these Four-and-Twenty Tailors, sewing and embroidering that rich Cloth, which the Sultan sends yearly for the Caaba of Mecca,² I thought within myself: How many other Unholies has your covering Art made holy, besides this Arabian Whinstone!

"Still more touching was it when, turning

the corner of a lane, in the Scottish Town of Edinburgh, I came upon a Signpost, whereon stood written that such and such a one was 'Breeches-Maker to his Majesty'; and stood painted the Effigies of a Pair of Leather Breeches, and between the knees these memorable words, SIC ITUR AD ASTRA.³ Was not this the martyr prison-speech of a Tailor sighing indeed in bonds, yet sighing towards deliverance, and prophetically appealing to a better day? A day of justice, when the worth of Breeches would be revealed to man, and the Scissors become for ever venerable.

"Neither, perhaps, may I now say, has his appeal been altogether in vain. It was in this high moment, when the soul, rent, as it were, and shed asunder, is open to inspiring influence, that I first conceived this Work on Clothes: the greatest I can ever hope to do; which has already, after long retardations, occupied, and will yet occupy, so large a section of my Life; and of which the Primary and simpler Portion may here find its conclusion."

³Thus one goes to the stars—i.e., this is the way to immortality (*Æneid*, IX, 641).

¹In Constantinople.

²The Caaba is a square building in the mosque at Mecca. In its northwest corner a black stone is let into the wall ("this Arabian whinstone") which is supposed to have been the original god of the natives of Mecca. This stone is an object of veneration for all Mahometans.

JOHN HENRY, CARDINAL NEWMAN (1801-1890)

Newman was born in London on 21 February, 1801. His father was a banker and a man of cultivated interests; his mother was a descendant of French Huguenots who had come to England after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685). In his childhood he received religious training which may be described as a "modified Calvinism," and from an early time he was familiar with the Authorized Version of the Bible, but there is nothing in his ancestry or training which accounts for the strong sense of immaterial reality which he had even as a boy, and which contained the germs of his later development. As a child, he tells us, "I used to wish the Arabian Tales were true; my imagination ran on unknown influences, on magical powers, and talismans. . . . I thought life might be a dream, or I an Angel, and all this world a deception, my fellow-angels by a playful device concealing themselves from me, and deceiving me with the semblance of a material world." This was not a mere passing fancy with him, but an early manifestation of a conviction of immaterial reality which was later strengthened by such apparently diverse influences as the tales of Sir Walter Scott and the theological treatises of Thomas Scott, and which, deepened after his experience of "conversion" at fifteen, remained his abiding possession. He says that his religious studies at fifteen and in years immediately following aided "in isolating me from the objects which surrounded me, in confirming me in my mistrust of the reality of material phenomena, and making me rest in the thought of two and two only supreme and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator."

Newman received his secondary education at a school in Ealing, and went thence to Trinity College, Oxford, in 1816. He received his B. A. in 1820. In 1822 he was elected a Fellow of Oriel College and two years later he was ordained a deacon in the Church of England. In 1825 he was ordained a priest and in the following year became one of the tutors of his college. About this time he also preached his first university sermon, and in 1828 he became vicar of St. Mary's Church, Oxford. This remained his outward position for a number of years. Newman's nature was closely akin to Coleridge's and Carlyle's. He heard the same inner voice that they heard, telling him of truths beyond the ken of rationalists and scientists. In his case this experience took the form of a living sense of the truth of Christianity very different from the largely formal professions of faith then usual in the Anglican Church outside of the evangelical party. Newman, moreover, saw with remarkable clearness the character and strength of the forces which were to oppose Christianity in the nineteenth century, and he consecrated his life to warfare against liberalism, as he called it, or rationalism. For this purpose he deemed it essential that the Anglican Church should be aroused from its lethargy and awakened to a full sense of the unbroken Christian tradition which it claimed to represent. This was the starting-point of the Oxford Movement, of which Newman was the leading spirit. Newman held that the "campaign" actually began with a sermon preached by John Keble in Oxford in 1833. In this sermon Keble termed an anti-clerical act of Parliament an act of national apostasy. The sermon was quickly followed by the first of the famous series of ninety *Tracts for the Times*. In these tracts and in other ways Newman and his associates sought to emphasize the Catholic doctrines of the Anglican Church and to demonstrate that that Church was really the modern representative of Christianity as it had existed in earlier days before the degeneracy and corruption of the Roman Church had brought about the Reformation. In the course of his studies, however, Newman gradually became convinced that, despite the corruption and idolatry of Rome, the English Reformation had been an act of schism, and at the same time he had it forcibly borne in upon him that the Anglican Church would not follow him in his conclusion. The result was that in 1845 Newman himself went over to the Roman Catholic Church. He had by this time become a national figure whose every movement was watched with deep interest and fear, and it is hardly too much to say that for a time the fate of the Church of England seemed to depend upon his actions.

In the early eighteen-fifties there was a movement on foot to establish a Catholic University in Dublin. In 1852, as a means of preparation for this, Newman delivered in Dublin a course of lectures *On the Scope and Nature of University Education*, later published with other papers as *The Idea of a University*. These lectures well illustrate the felicity of Newman's prose style and have, in addition, been generally recognized as a classic statement of the meaning of a liberal education. From 1854 until 1858 Newman was Rector of the new Catholic University, but the enterprise was in the end a failure. Newman's career in the Catholic Church was in fact outwardly a series of disappointments until late in his life, because he was misunderstood and distrusted by some of his ecclesiastical superiors. In addition

he was, in the years after 1845, regarded with dislike by Englishmen in general because of the effort they felt he had made to destroy the Anglican Church. But in 1864 he was made the object of an egregious attack by Charles Kingsley, who published an assertion that Newman had countenanced falsehood on the part of the Roman clergy, and Newman immediately took advantage of this opportunity both to clear his name and to explain to the English public the development of his religious opinions. This he did in his *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, a justly famous book written with transparent candor and sincerity. In his old age Newman received honors both from England and from Rome which indicate the position he had attained as the greatest English religious leader of the nineteenth century. In 1877 he was elected an Honorary Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, and in 1879 was created a Cardinal of the Roman Church. He died on 11 August, 1890, and was buried at Rednal.

THE IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY

DISCOURSE VI

LIBERAL KNOWLEDGE VIEWED IN RELATION TO LEARNING

IT WERE well if the English, like the Greek language, possessed some definite word to express, simply and generally, intellectual proficiency or perfection, such as "health," as used with reference to the animal frame, and "virtue," with reference to our moral nature. I am not able to find such a term;—talent, ability, genius, belong distinctly to the raw material, which is the subject-matter, not to that excellence which is the result of exercise and training. When we turn, indeed, to the particular kinds of intellectual perfection, words are forthcoming for our purpose, as, for instance, judgment, taste, and skill; yet even these belong, for the most part, to powers or habits bearing upon practice or upon art, and not to any perfect condition of the intellect, considered in itself. Wisdom, again, which is a more comprehensive word than any other, certainly has a direct relation to conduct and to human life. Knowledge, indeed, and science express purely intellectual ideas, but still not a state or habit of the intellect; for knowledge, in its ordinary sense, is but one of its circumstances, denoting a possession or a faculty; and science has been appropriated to the subject-matter of the intellect, instead of belonging at present, as it ought to do, to the intellect itself. The consequence is that, on an occasion like this, many words are

necessary, in order, first, to bring out and convey what surely is no difficult idea in itself—that of the cultivation of the intellect as an end; next, in order to recommend what surely is no unreasonable object; and lastly, to describe and make the mind realize the particular perfection in which that object consists. Every one knows practically what are the constituents of health or of virtue; and every one recognizes health and virtue as ends to be pursued; it is otherwise with intellectual excellence, and this must be my excuse, if I seem to any one to be bestowing a good deal of labor on a preliminary matter.

In default of a recognized term, I have called the perfection or virtue of the intellect by the name of philosophy, philosophical knowledge, enlargement of mind, or illumination; terms which are not uncommonly given to it by writers of this day: but, whatever name we bestow on it, it is, I believe, as a matter of history, the business of a university to make this intellectual culture its direct scope, or to employ itself in the education of the intellect—just as the work of a hospital lies in healing the sick or wounded; of a riding or fencing school, or of a gymnasium, in exercising the limbs; of an almshouse, in aiding and solacing the old; of an orphanage, in protecting innocence; of a penitentiary, in restoring the guilty. I say a university, taken in its bare idea, and before we view it as an instrument of the Church, has this object and this mission; it contemplates neither moral impression nor mechanical production; it professes to exercise the mind neither in art nor in duty; its function is intellectual culture: here it may leave its scholars, and it has done its work when it has done as much as this. It educates the intellect to reason well in all matters, to reach out towards truth, and to grasp it.

The two Discourses here printed are given the numbers by which they are generally referred to, but they are taken from the revised edition of 1859 (where they are differently numbered), not from the first edition of 1852. They are reprinted with the permission of Messrs. Longmans, Green, and Company, Newman's authorized publishers.

This, I said in my foregoing Discourse, was the object of a university, viewed in itself, and apart from the Catholic Church, or from the state, or from any other power which may use it; and I illustrated this in various ways. I said that the intellect must have an excellence of its own, for there was nothing which had not its specific good; that the word "educate" would not be used of intellectual culture, as it is used, had not the intellect had an end of its own; that, had it not such an end, there would be no meaning in calling certain intellectual exercises "liberal," in contrast with "useful," as is commonly done; that the very notion of a philosophical temper implied it, for it threw us back upon research and system as ends in themselves, distinct from effects and works of any kind; that a philosophical scheme of knowledge, or system of sciences, could not, from the nature of the case, issue in any one definite art or pursuit, as its end; and that, on the other hand, the discovery and contemplation of truth, to which research and systematizing led, were surely sufficient ends, though nothing beyond them were added, and that they had ever been accounted sufficient by mankind.

Here then I take up the subject; and having determined that the cultivation of the intellect is an end distinct and sufficient in itself, and that, so far as words go it is an enlargement or illumination, I proceed to inquire what this mental breadth, or power, or light, or philosophy consists in. A hospital heals a broken limb or cures a fever; what does an institution effect, which professes the health, not of the body, not of the soul, but of the intellect? What is this good, which in former times, as well as our own, has been found worth the notice, the appropriation, of the Catholic Church?

I have then to investigate, in the Discourses which follow, those qualities and characteristics of the intellect in which its cultivation issues or rather consists; and, with a view of assisting myself in this undertaking, I shall recur to certain questions which have already been touched upon. These questions are three: *viz.*, the relation of intellectual culture, first, to *mere* knowledge; secondly, to *professional* knowledge; and thirdly, to *religious* knowledge. In other words, are *acquirements* and *attain-*

ments the scope of a university education? or *expertness in particular arts and pursuits?* or *moral and religious proficiency?* or something besides these three? These questions I shall examine in succession, with the purpose I have mentioned; and I hope to be excused if, in this anxious undertaking, I am led to repeat what, either in these Discourses or elsewhere, I have already put upon paper. And first, of *mere knowledge*, or learning, and its connection with intellectual illumination or philosophy.

I suppose the *primâ-facie*¹ view which the public at large would take of a university, considered as a place of education, is nothing more or less than a place for acquiring a great deal of knowledge on a great many subjects. Memory is one of the first developed of the mental faculties; a boy's business when he goes to school is to learn, that is, to store up things in his memory. For some years his intellect is little more than an instrument for taking in facts, or a receptacle for storing them; he welcomes them as fast as they come to him; he lives on what is without; he has his eyes ever about him; he has a lively susceptibility of impressions; he imbibes information of every kind; and little does he make his own in a true sense of the word, living rather upon his neighbors all around him. He has opinions, religious, political, and literary, and, for a boy, is very positive in them and sure about them; but he gets them from his schoolfellows, or his masters, or his parents, as the case may be. Such as he is in his other relations, such also is he in his school exercises; his mind is observant, sharp, ready, retentive; he is almost passive in the acquisition of knowledge. I say this in no disparagement of the idea of a clever boy. Geography, chronology, history, language, natural history, he heaps up the matter of these studies as treasures for a future day. It is the seven years of plenty with him: he gathers in by handfuls, like the Egyptians, without counting; and though, as time goes on, there is exercise for his argumentative powers in the elements of mathematics, and for his taste in the poets and orators, still, while at school, or at least, till quite the last years of his time, he acquires, and little more; and when

¹Superficial.

he is leaving for the university, he is mainly the creature of foreign influences and circumstances, and made up of accidents, homogeneous or not, as the case may be. Moreover, the moral habits, which are a boy's praise, encourage and assist this result; that is, diligence, assiduity, regularity, despatch, persevering application; for these are the direct conditions of acquisition, and naturally lead to it. Acquirements, again, are emphatically producible, and at a moment; they are a something to show, both for master and scholar; an audience, even though ignorant themselves of the subjects of an examination, can comprehend when questions are answered and when they are not. Here again is a reason why mental culture should in the minds of men be identified with the acquisition of knowledge.

The same notion possesses the public mind, when it passes on from the thought of a school to that of a university: and with the best of reasons so far as this, that there is no true culture without acquirements, and that philosophy presupposes knowledge. It requires a great deal of reading, or a wide range of information, to warrant us in putting forth our opinions on any serious subject; and without such learning the most original mind may be able indeed to dazzle, to amuse, to refute, to perplex, but not to come to any useful result or any trustworthy conclusion. There are indeed persons who profess a different view of the matter, and even act upon it. Every now and then you will find a person of vigorous or fertile mind, who relies upon his own resources, despises all former authors, and gives the world, with the utmost fearlessness, his views upon religion, or history, or any other popular subject. And his works may sell for a while; he may get a name in his day; but this will be all. His readers are sure to find in the long run that his doctrines are mere theories, and not the expression of facts, that they are chaff instead of bread, and then his popularity drops as suddenly as it rose.

Knowledge, then, is the indispensable condition of expansion of mind, and the instrument of attaining to it; this cannot be denied, it is ever to be insisted on; I begin with it as a first principle; however, the very truth of it carries men too far, and confirms to them the notion that it is the whole of it.

A narrow mind is thought to be that which contains little knowledge; and an enlarged mind, that which holds a deal; and what seems to put the matter beyond dispute is, the fact of the number of studies which are pursued in a university, by its very profession. Lectures are given on every kind of subject; examinations are held; prizes awarded. There are moral, metaphysical, physical professors; professors of languages, of history, of mathematics, of experimental science. Lists of questions are published, wonderful for their range and depth, variety and difficulty; treatises are written, which carry upon their very face the evidence of extensive reading or multifarious information; what then is wanted for mental culture to a person of large reading and scientific attainments? what is grasp of mind but acquirement? where shall philosophical repose be found, but in the consciousness and enjoyment of large intellectual possessions?

And yet this notion is, I conceive, a mistake, and my present business is to show that it is one, and that the end of a liberal education is not mere knowledge, or knowledge considered in its *matter*; and I shall best attain my object by actually setting down some cases, which will be generally granted to be instances of the process of enlightenment or enlargement of mind, and others which are not, and thus, by the comparison, you will be able to judge for yourselves, gentlemen, whether knowledge, that is, acquirement, is after all the real principle of the enlargement, or whether that principle is not rather something beyond it.

For instance, let a person, whose experience has hitherto been confined to the more calm and unpretending scenery of these islands, whether here or in England, go for the first time into parts where physical nature puts on her wilder and more awful forms, whether at home or abroad, as into mountainous districts; or let one, who has ever lived in a quiet village, go for the first time to a great metropolis—then I suppose he will have a sensation which perhaps he never had before. He has a feeling not in addition or increase of former feelings, but of something different in its nature. He will perhaps be borne forward, and find for a time that he has lost his bearings. He has made a certain progress, and he has a con-

siousness of mental enlargement; he does not stand where he did, he has a new center, and a range of thoughts to which he was before a stranger.

Again, the view of the heavens which the telescope opens upon us, if allowed to fill and possess the mind, may almost whirl it round and make it dizzy. It brings in a flood of ideas, and is rightly called an intellectual enlargement, whatever is meant by the term.

And so again, the sight of beasts of prey and other foreign animals, their strangeness, the originality (if I may use the term) of their forms and gestures and habits and their variety and independence of each other, throw us out of ourselves into another creation, and as if under another Creator, if I may so express the temptation which may come on the mind. We seem to have new faculties, or a new exercise for our faculties, by this addition to our knowledge; like a prisoner who, having been accustomed to wear manacles or fetters, suddenly finds his arms and legs free.

Hence physical science generally, in all its departments, as bringing before us the exuberant riches and resources, yet the orderly course, of the universe, elevates and excites the student, and at first, I may say, almost takes away his breath, while in time it exercises a tranquillizing influence upon him.

Again, the study of history is said to enlarge and enlighten the mind, and why? because, as I conceive, it gives it a power of judging of passing events, and of all events, and a conscious superiority over them which before it did not possess.

And in like manner, what is called seeing the world, entering into active life, going into society, traveling, gaining acquaintance with the various classes of the community, coming into contact with the principles and modes of thought of various parties, interests, and races, their views, aims, habits, and manners, their religious creeds and forms of worship—gaining experience how various yet how alike men are, how low-minded, how bad, how opposed, yet how confident in their opinions; all this exerts a perceptible influence upon the mind, which it is impossible to mistake, be it good or be it bad, and is popularly called its enlargement.

And then again, the first time the mind comes across the arguments and speculations

of unbelievers, and feels what a novel light they cast upon what he has hitherto accounted sacred; and still more, if it gives in to them and embraces them, and throws off as so much prejudice what it has hitherto held, and, as if waking from a dream, begins to realize to its imagination that there is now no such thing as law and the transgression of law, that sin is a phantom, and punishment a bugbear, that it is free to sin, free to enjoy the world and the flesh; and still further, when it does enjoy them, and reflects that it may think and hold just what it will, that "the world is all before it where to choose,"¹ and what system to build up as its own private persuasion; when this torrent of bad thoughts rushes over and inundates it, who will deny that the fruit of the tree of knowledge, or what the mind takes for knowledge, has made it one of the gods, with a sense of expansion and elevation—an intoxication in reality, still, so far as the subjective state of the mind goes, an illumination? Hence the fanaticism of individuals or nations, who suddenly cast off their Maker. Their eyes are opened, and, like the judgment-stricken king in the tragedy,² they see two suns, and a magic universe, out of which they look back upon their former state of faith and innocence with a sort of contempt and indignation, as if they were then but fools, and the dupes of imposture.

On the other hand, religion has its own enlargement, and an enlargement, not of tumult, but of peace. It is often remarked of uneducated persons, who have hitherto thought little of the unseen world, that, on their turning to God, looking into themselves, regulating their hearts, reforming their conduct, and meditating on death and judgment, heaven and hell, they seem to become, in point of intellect, different beings from what they were. Before, they took things as they came, and thought no more of one thing than another. But now every event has a meaning; they have their own estimate of whatever happens to them; they are mindful of times and seasons, and compare the present with the past; and the world, no longer dull, monotonous, unprofitable, and hopeless, is a various and complicated

¹*Paradise Lost*, XII, 646.

²Pentheus of Thebes, in the *Bacchæ* of Euripides. Pentheus speaks of seeming to see two suns in l. 918.

drama, with parts and an object, and an awful moral.

Now from these instances, to which many more might be added, it is plain, first, that the communication of knowledge certainly is either a condition or the means of that sense of enlargement or enlightenment, of which at this day we hear so much in certain quarters: this cannot be denied; but next, it is equally plain, that such communication is not the whole of the process. The enlargement consists, not merely in the passive reception into the mind of a number of ideas hitherto unknown to it, but in the mind's energetic and simultaneous action upon and towards and among those new ideas, which are rushing in upon it. It is the action of a formative power, reducing to order and meaning the matter of our acquirements; it is a making the objects of our knowledge subjectively our own, or, to use a familiar word, it is a digestion of what we receive, into the substance of our previous state of thought; and without this no enlargement is said to follow. There is no enlargement, unless there be a comparison of ideas one with another, as they come before the mind, and a systematizing of them. We feel our minds to be growing and expanding *then*, when we not only learn, but refer what we learn to what we know already. It is not a mere addition to our knowledge which is the illumination; but the locomotion, the movement onwards, of that mental center, to which both what we know and what we are learning, the accumulating mass of our acquirements, gravitates. And therefore a truly great intellect, and recognized to be such by the common opinion of mankind, such as the intellect of Aristotle, or of St. Thomas,¹ or of Newton, or of Goethe (I purposely take instances within and without the Catholic pale, when I would speak of the intellect as such), is one which takes a connected view of old and new, past and present, far and near, and which has an insight into the influence of all these one on another; without which there is no whole, and no center. It possesses the knowledge, not only of things, but also of their mutual and true relations; knowledge, not merely considered as acquirement, but as philosophy.

Accordingly, when this analytical, distributive, harmonizing process is away, the mind experiences no enlargement, and is not reckoned as enlightened or comprehensive, whatever it may add to its knowledge. For instance, a great memory, as I have already said, does not make a philosopher, any more than a dictionary can be called a grammar. There are men who embrace in their minds a vast multitude of ideas, but with little sensibility about their real relations towards each other. These may be antiquarians, annalists, naturalists; they may be learned in the law; they may be versed in statistics; they are most useful in their own place; I should shrink from speaking disrespectfully of them; still, there is nothing in such attainments to guarantee the absence of narrowness of mind. If they are nothing more than well-read men, or men of information, they have not what specially deserves the name of culture of mind, or fulfills the type of liberal education.

In like manner we sometimes fall in with persons who have seen much of the world, and of the men who, in their day, have played a conspicuous part in it, but who generalize nothing, and have no observation, in the true sense of the word. They abound in information in detail, curious and entertaining, about men and things; and, having lived under the influence of no very clear or settled principles, religious or political, they speak of every one and everything, only as so many phenomena, which are complete in themselves, and lead to nothing, not discussing them, or teaching any truth, or instructing the hearer, but simply talking. No one would say that these persons, well informed as they are, had attained to any great culture of intellect or to philosophy.

The case is the same still more strikingly where the persons in question are beyond dispute men of inferior powers and deficient education. Perhaps they have been much in foreign countries, and they receive, in a passive, otiose, unfruitful way, the various facts which are forced upon them there. Seafaring men, for example, range from one end of the earth to the other; but the multiplicity of external objects which they have encountered forms no symmetrical and consistent picture upon their imagination; they see the tapestry of human life as it were on

¹Aquinas.

the wrong side, and it tells no story. They sleep, and they rise up, and they find themselves now in Europe, now in Asia; they see visions of great cities and wild regions; they are in the marts of commerce or amid the islands of the South; they gaze on Pompey's Pillar¹ or on the Andes, and nothing which meets them carries them forward or backward to any idea beyond itself. Nothing has a drift or relation; nothing has a history or a promise. Everything stands by itself, and comes and goes in its turn, like the shifting scenes of a show, which leave the spectator where he was. Perhaps you are near such a man on a particular occasion, and expect him to be shocked or perplexed at something which occurs; but one thing is much the same to him as another, or, if he is perplexed, it is as not knowing what to say, whether it is right to admire, or to ridicule, or to disapprove, while conscious that some expression of opinion is expected from him; for in fact he has no standard of judgment at all, and no landmarks to guide him to a conclusion. Such is mere acquisition, and, I repeat, no one would dream of calling it philosophy.

Instances such as these confirm, by the contrast, the conclusion I have already drawn from those which preceded them. That only is true enlargement of mind which is the power of viewing many things at once as one whole, of referring them severally to their true place in the universal system, of understanding their respective values, and determining their mutual dependence. Thus is that form of universal knowledge, of which I have on a former occasion spoken, set up in the individual intellect, and constitutes its perfection. Possessed of this real illumination, the mind never views any part of the extended subject-matter of knowledge without recollecting that it is but a part, or without the associations which spring from this recollection. It makes everything in some sort lead to everything else; it would communicate the image of the whole to every separate portion, till that whole becomes in imagination like a spirit, everywhere pervading and penetrating its component parts, and giving them one definite meaning. Just as our bodily organs, when

mentioned, recall their function in the body, as the word "creation" suggests the Creator, and "subjects" a sovereign, so, in the mind of the philosopher, as we are abstractedly conceiving of him, the elements of the physical and moral world, sciences, arts, pursuits, ranks, offices, events, opinions, individualities, are all viewed as one, with correlative functions, and as gradually by successive combinations converging, one and all, to the true center.

To have even a portion of this illuminative reason and true philosophy is the highest state to which nature can aspire, in the way of intellect; it puts the mind above the influences of chance and necessity, above anxiety, suspense, tumult, and superstition, which are the portion of the many. Men, whose minds are possessed with some one object, take exaggerated views of its importance, are feverish in the pursuit of it, make it the measure of things which are utterly foreign to it, and are startled and despond if it happens to fail them. They are ever in alarm or in transport. Those on the other hand who have no object or principle whatever to hold by, lose their way, every step they take. They are thrown out, and do not know what to think or say, at every fresh juncture; they have no view of persons, or occurrences, or facts, which come suddenly upon them, and they hang upon the opinion of others, for want of internal resources. But the intellect, which has been disciplined to the perfection of its powers, which knows, and thinks while it knows, which has learned to leaven the dense mass of facts and events with the elastic force of reason, such an intellect cannot be partial, cannot be exclusive, cannot be impetuous, cannot be at a loss, cannot but be patient, collected, and majestically calm, because it discerns the end in every beginning, the origin in every end, the law in every interruption, the limit in each delay; because it ever knows where it stands, and how its path lies from one point to another. It is the *τετράγωνος* of the Peripatetic,² and has the *nil admirari*³ of the Stoic—

²The four-square man of Aristotle (see *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, x, 11), who was called the Peripatetic because, according to tradition, he walked about in the Lyceum while lecturing to his pupils.

³To wonder at nothing (Horace, *Epistles*, I, vi, 1).

¹Near Alexandria.

*Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes, et inexorabile fatum
Subiecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.*¹

There are men who, when in difficulties, originate at the moment vast ideas or dazzling projects; who, under the influence of excitement, are able to cast a light, almost as if from inspiration, on a subject or course of action which comes before them; who have a sudden presence of mind equal to any emergency, rising with the occasion, and an undaunted magnanimous bearing, and an energy and keenness which is but made intense by opposition. This is genius, this is heroism; it is the exhibition of a natural gift, which no culture can teach, at which no institution can aim; here, on the contrary, we are concerned, not with mere nature, but with training and teaching. That perfection of the intellect, which is the result of education, and its *beau idéal*, to be imparted to individuals in their respective measures, is the clear, calm, accurate vision and comprehension of all things, as far as the finite mind can embrace them, each in its place, and with its own characteristics upon it. It is almost prophetic from its knowledge of history; it is almost heart-searching from its knowledge of human nature; it has almost supernatural charity from its freedom from littleness and prejudice; it has almost the repose of faith, because nothing can startle it; it has almost the beauty and harmony of heavenly contemplation, so intimate is it with the eternal order of things and the music of the spheres.

And now, if I may take for granted that the true and adequate end of intellectual training and of a university is not learning or acquirement, but rather, is thought or reason exercised upon knowledge, or what may be called philosophy, I shall be in a position to explain the various mistakes which at the present day beset the subject of university education.

I say then, if we would improve the intellect, first of all, we must ascend: we cannot gain real knowledge on a level; we must generalize, we must reduce to method, we must have a grasp of principles, and group

and shape our acquisitions by them. It matters not whether our field of operation be wide or limited; in every case, to command it, is to mount above it. Who has not felt the irritation of mind and impatience created by a deep, rich country, visited for the first time, with winding lanes, and high hedges, and green steeps, and tangled woods, and everything smiling indeed, but in a maze? The same feeling comes upon us in a strange city, when we have no map of its streets. Hence you hear of practised travelers, when they first come into a place, mounting some high hill or church tower, by way of reconnoitering its neighborhood. In like manner you must be above your knowledge, gentlemen, not under it, or it will oppress you; and the more you have of it the greater will be the load. The learning of a Salmasius² or a Burman,³ unless you are its master, will be your tyrant. *Imperat aut servit;*⁴ if you can wield it with a strong arm, it is a great weapon; otherwise,

*Vis consili experts
Mole ruit suâ.*⁵

You will be overwhelmed, like Tarpeia,⁶ by the heavy wealth which you have exacted from tributary generations.

Instances abound; there are authors who are as pointless as they are inexhaustible in their literary resources. They measure knowledge by bulk, as it lies in the rude block, without symmetry, without design. How many commentators are there on the Classics, how many on Holy Scripture, from whom we rise up, wondering at the learning which has passed before us, and wondering why it passed! How many writers are there of ecclesiastical history, such as Mosheim or Du Pin,⁷ who, breaking up their subject into

¹Dutch classical scholar (1588-1653), professor at Leyden.

²Also a Dutch scholar (1668-1741), professor at Utrecht and Leyden.

³It either commands or serves (said of money, Horace, *Epistles*, I, x, 48).

⁴Force without discretion falls of its own weight (Horace, *Odes*, III, iv, 65).

⁵She betrayed the Roman citadel on the Capitoline Hill to the Sabines, in return for what they wore on their arms. What she wanted was their bracelets, but instead they cast their shields on her and crushed her to death.

⁶The former a German protestant (1694-1755), the latter a Frenchman (1783-1865).

⁷Happy is he who is able to know the sequences of things, and thus triumphs over all fear, and inexorable fate, and the roar of greedy Acheron (Virgil, *Georgics*, II, 490-492).

details, destroy its life, and defraud us of the whole by their anxiety about the parts! The sermons, again, of the English divines in the seventeenth century, how often are they mere repertories of miscellaneous and officious learning! Of course Catholics also may read without thinking; and in their case, equally as with Protestants, it holds good, that that knowledge of theirs is unworthy of the name, knowledge which they have not thought through, and thought out. Such readers are only possessed by their knowledge, not possessed of it; nay, in matter of fact they are often even carried away by it, without any volition of their own. Recollect, the memory can tyrannize as well as the imagination. Derangement, I believe, has been considered as a loss of control over the sequence of ideas. The mind, once set in motion, is henceforth deprived of the power of initiation, and becomes the victim of a train of associations, one thought suggesting another, in the way of cause and effect, as if by a mechanical process, or some physical necessity. No one, who has had experience of men of studious habits, but must recognize the existence of a parallel phenomenon in the case of those who have over-stimulated the memory. In such persons reason acts almost as feebly and as impotently as in the madman; once fairly started on any subject whatever, they have no power of self-control; they passively endure the succession of impulses which are evolved out of the original exciting cause; they are passed on from one idea to another and go steadily forward, plodding along one line of thought in spite of the amplest concessions of the hearer, or wandering from it in endless digression in spite of his remonstrances. Now, if, as is very certain, no one would envy the madman the glow and originality of his conceptions, why must we extol the cultivation of that intellect, which is the prey, not indeed of barren fancies but of barren facts, of random intrusions from without, though not of morbid imaginations from within? And in thus speaking, I am not denying that a strong and ready memory is in itself a real treasure; I am not disparaging a well-stored mind, though it be nothing besides, provided it be sober, any more than I would despise a bookseller's shop: it is of great value to others, even when

not so to the owner. Nor am I banishing, far from it, the possessors of deep and multifarious learning from my ideal university; they adorn it in the eyes of men; I do but say that they constitute no type of the results at which it aims; that it is no great gain to the intellect to have enlarged the memory at the expense of faculties which are indisputably higher.

Nor indeed am I supposing that there is any great danger, at least in this day, of over-education; the danger is on the other side. I will tell you, gentlemen, what has been the practical error of the last twenty years—not to load the memory of the student with a mass of undigested knowledge, but to attempt so much that nothing has been really effected, to teach so many things, that nothing has properly been learned at all. It has been the error of distracting and enfeebling the mind by an unmeaning profusion of subjects; of implying that a smattering in a dozen branches of study was not shallowness, which it really is, but enlargement; of considering an acquaintance with the learned names of things and persons, and the possession of clever duodecimos, and attendance on eloquent lecturers, and membership with scientific institutions, and the sight of the experiments of a platform and the specimens of a museum, that all this was not dissipation of mind, but progress. All things now are to be learned at once, not first one thing, then another, not one well but many badly. Learning is to be without exertion, without attention, without toil; without grounding, without advance, without finishing. There is to be nothing individual in it; and this, forsooth, is the wonder of the age. What the steam-engine does with matter, the printing-press is to do with mind; it is to act mechanically, and the population is to be passively, almost unconsciously enlightened, by the mere multiplication and dissemination of volumes. Whether it be the schoolboy, or the school-girl, or the youth at college, or the mechanic in the town, or the politician in the senate, all have been the victims in one way or other of this most preposterous and pernicious of delusions. Wise men have lifted up their voices in vain; and at length, lest their own institutions should be outshone and should disappear in the folly of the hour, they have

been obliged, as far as was conscientiously possible, to humor a spirit which they could not withstand, and make temporizing concessions at which they could not but inwardly smile.

Now I must guard, gentlemen, against any possible misconception of my meaning. Let me frankly declare then, that I have no fear at all of the education of the people: the more education they have the better, so that it is really education. Next, as to the cheap publication of scientific and literary works, which is now in vogue, I consider it a great advantage, convenience, and gain; that is, to those to whom education has given a capacity for using them. Further, I consider such innocent recreations as science and literature are able to furnish will be a very fit occupation of the thoughts and the leisure of young persons, and may be made the means of keeping them from bad employments and bad companions. Moreover, as to that superficial acquaintance with chemistry, and geology, and astronomy, and political economy, and modern history, and biography, and other branches of knowledge, which periodical literature and occasional lectures and scientific institutions diffuse through the community, I think it a graceful accomplishment, and a suitable, nay, in this day a necessary accomplishment, in the case of educated men. Nor, lastly, am I disparaging or discouraging the thorough acquisition of any one of these studies, or denying that, as far as it goes, such thorough acquisition is a real education of the mind. All I say is, call things by their right names, and do not confuse together ideas which are essentially different. A thorough knowledge of one science and a superficial acquaintance with many, are not the same thing; a smattering of a hundred things or a memory for detail, is not a philosophical or comprehensive view. Recreations are not education; accomplishments are not education. Do not say, the people must be educated, when, after all, you only mean amused, refreshed, soothed, put into good spirits and good humor, or kept from vicious excesses. I do not say that such amusements, such occupations of mind, are not a great gain; but they are not education. You may as well call drawing and fencing education, as a general knowledge of botany or conchology. Stuff-

ing birds or playing stringed instruments is an elegant pastime, and a resource to the idle, but it is not education; it does not form or cultivate the intellect. Education is a high word; it is the preparation for knowledge, and it is the imparting of knowledge in proportion to that preparation. We require intellectual eyes to know withal, as bodily eyes for sight. We need both objects and organs intellectual; we cannot gain them without setting about it; we cannot gain them in our sleep or by haphazard. The best telescope does not dispense with eyes; the printing-press or the lecture room will assist us greatly, but we must be true to ourselves, we must be parties in the work. A university is, according to the usual designation, an *alma mater*, knowing her children one by one, not a foundry, or a mint, or a treadmill.

I protest to you, gentlemen, that if I had to choose between a so-called university which dispensed with residence and tutorial superintendence, and gave its degrees to any person who passed an examination in a wide range of subjects, and a university which had no professors or examinations at all, but merely brought a number of young men together for three or four years, and then sent them away as the University of Oxford is said to have done some sixty years since, if I were asked which of these two methods was the better discipline of the intellect—mind, I do not say which is *morally* the better, for it is plain that compulsory study must be a good and idleness an intolerable mischief—but if I must determine which of the two courses was the more successful in training, molding, enlarging the mind, which sent out men the more fitted for their secular duties, which produced better public men, men of the world, men whose names would descend to posterity, I have no hesitation in giving the preference to that university which did nothing, over that which exacted of its members an acquaintance with every science under the sun. And, paradox as this may seem, still if results be the test of systems, the influence of the public schools and colleges of England, in the course of the last century, at least will bear out one side of the contrast as I have drawn it. What would come, on the other hand, of the ideal systems of education which have

fascinated the imagination of this age, could they ever take effect, and whether they would not produce a generation frivolous, narrow-minded, and resourceless, intellectually considered, is a fair subject for debate, but so far is certain, that the universities and scholastic establishments to which I refer, and which did little more than bring together first boys and then youths in large numbers, these institutions, with miserable deformities on the side of morals, with a hollow profession of Christianity, and a heathen code of ethics—I say, at least they can boast of a succession of heroes and statesmen, of literary men and philosophers, of men conspicuous for great natural virtues, for habits of business, for knowledge of life, for practical judgment, for cultivated tastes, for accomplishments, who have made England what it is—able to subdue the earth, able to domineer over Catholics.

How is this to be explained? I suppose as follows: When a multitude of young persons, keen, open-hearted, sympathetic, and observant, as young persons are, come together and freely mix with each other, they are sure to learn one from another, even if there be no one to teach them; the conversation of all is a series of lectures to each, and they gain for themselves new ideas and views, fresh matter of thought, and distinct principles for judging and acting, day by day. An infant has to learn the meaning of the information which its senses convey to it, and this seems to be its employment. It fancies all that the eye presents to it to be close to it, till it actually learns the contrary, and thus by practice does it ascertain the relations and uses of those first elements of knowledge which are necessary for its animal existence. A parallel teaching is necessary for our social being, and it is secured by a large school or a college, and this effect may be fairly called in its own department an enlargement of mind. It is seeing the world on a small field with little trouble; for the pupils or students come from very different places, and with widely different notions, and there is much to generalize, much to adjust, much to eliminate, there are inter-relations to be defined, and conventional rules to be established, in the process, by which the whole assemblage is molded together, and gains one tone and one character. Let it be

clearly understood, I repeat it, that I am not taking into account moral or religious considerations; I am but saying that that youthful community will constitute a whole, it will embody a specific idea, it will represent a doctrine, it will administer a code of conduct, and it will furnish principles of thought and action. It will give birth to a living teaching, which in course of time will take the shape of a self-perpetuating tradition, or a *genius loci*,¹ as it is sometimes called; which haunts the home where it has been born, and which imbues and forms, more or less, and one by one, every individual who is successively brought under its shadow. Thus it is that, independent of direct instruction on the part of superiors, there is a sort of self-education in the academic institutions of protestant England; a characteristic tone of thought, a recognized standard of judgment is found in them, which, as developed in the individual who is submitted to it, becomes a twofold source of strength to him, both from the distinct stamp it impresses on his mind, and from the bond of union which it creates between him and others—effects which are shared by the authorities of the place, for they themselves have been educated in it, and at all times are exposed to the influence of its moral atmosphere. Here then is a real teaching, whatever be its standards and principles, true or false; and it at least tends towards cultivation of the intellect; it at least recognizes that knowledge is something more than a sort of passive reception of scraps and details; it is a something, and it does a something, which never will issue from the most strenuous efforts of a set of teachers, with no mutual sympathies and no intercommunion, of a set of examiners with no opinions which they dare profess, and with no common principles, who are teaching or questioning a set of youths who do not know them, and do not know each other, on a large number of subjects, different in kind, and connected by no wide philosophy, three times a week, or three times a year, or once in three years, in chill lecture-rooms or on a pompous anniversary.

May, self-education in any shape, in the most restricted sense, is preferable to a

¹Spirit of the place.

system of teaching which, professing so much, really does so little for the mind. Shut your college gates against the votary of knowledge, throw him back upon the searchings and the efforts of his own mind; he will gain by being spared an entrance into your Babel. Few indeed there are who can dispense with the stimulus and support of instructors, or will do anything at all, if left to themselves. And fewer still (though such great minds are to be found) who will not, from such unassisted attempts, contract a self-reliance and a self-esteem, which are not only moral evils, but serious hindrances to the attainment of truth. And next to none, perhaps, or none, who will not be reminded from time to time of the disadvantage under which they lie, by their imperfect grounding, by the breaks, deficiencies, and irregularities of their knowledge, by the eccentricity of opinion and the confusion of principle which they exhibit. They will be too often ignorant of what every one knows and takes for granted, of that multitude of small truths which fall upon the mind like dust, impalpable and ever accumulating; they may be unable to converse, they may argue perversely, they may pride themselves on their worst paradoxes or their grossest truisms, they may be full of their own mode of viewing things, unwilling to be put out of their way, slow to enter into the minds of others;—but, with these and whatever other liabilities upon their heads, they are likely to have more thought, more mind, more philosophy, more true enlargement, than those earnest but ill-used persons who are forced to load their minds with a score of subjects against an examination, who have too much on their hands to indulge themselves in thinking or investigation, who devour premise and conclusion together with indiscriminate greediness, who hold whole sciences on faith, and commit demonstrations to memory, and who too often, as might be expected, when their period of education is passed, throw up all they have learned in disgust, having gained nothing really by their anxious labors, except perhaps the habit of application.

Yet such is the better specimen of the fruit of that ambitious system which has of late years been making way among us: for

its result on ordinary minds, and on the common run of students, is less satisfactory still; they leave their place of education simply dissipated and relaxed by the multiplicity of subjects, which they have never really mastered, and so shallow as not even to know their shallowness. How much better, I say, is it for the active and thoughtful intellect, where such is to be found, to eschew the college and the university altogether, than to submit to a drudgery so ignoble, a mockery so contumelious! How much more profitable for the independent mind, after the mere rudiments of education, to range through a library at random, taking down books as they meet him, and pursuing the trains of thought which his mother wit suggests! How much healthier to wander into the fields, and there with the exiled prince to find “tongues in the trees, books in the running brooks!”¹ How much more genuine an education is that of the poor boy in the poem²—a poem, whether in conception or in execution, one of the most touching in our language—who, not in the wide world, but ranging day by day around his widowed mother’s home, “a dexterous gleaner” in a narrow field, and with only such slender outfit

“as the village school and books a few
Supplied,”

contrived from the beach, and the quay, and the fisher’s boat, and the inn’s fireside, and the tradesman’s shop, and the shepherd’s walk, and the smuggler’s hut, and the mossy moor, and the screaming gulls, and the restless waves, to fashion for himself a philosophy and a poetry of his own!

But in a large subject I am exceeding my necessary limits. Gentlemen, I must conclude abruptly; and postpone any summing up of my argument, should that be necessary, to another day.

¹See *As You Like It*, II, i, 16.

²Crabbe’s *Tales of the Hall* [Bk. IV]. This Poem, let me say, I read on its first publication, above thirty years ago, with extreme delight, and have never lost my love of it; and on taking it up lately found I was even more touched by it than heretofore. A work which can please in youth and age seems to fulfill (in logical language) the *accidental definition* of a Classic (Newman’s note).

DISCOURSE VII

LIBERAL KNOWLEDGE VIEWED IN RELATION
TO PROFESSIONAL

I HAVE been insisting, in my two preceding Discourses, first, on the cultivation of the intellect, as an end which may reasonably be pursued for its own sake; and next, on the nature of that cultivation, or what that cultivation consists in. Truth of whatever kind is the proper object of the intellect; its cultivation then lies in fitting it to apprehend and contemplate truth. Now the intellect in its present state, with exceptions which need not here be specified, does not discern truth intuitively, or as a whole. We know, not by a direct and simple vision, not at a glance, but, as it were, by piecemeal and accumulation, by a mental process, by going round an object, by the comparison, the combination, the mutual correction, the continual adaptation, of many partial notions, by the joint application and concentration upon it of many faculties and exercises of mind. Such a union and concert of the intellectual powers, such an enlargement and development, such a comprehensiveness, is necessarily a matter of training. And again, such a training is a matter of rule; it is not mere application, however exemplary, which introduces the mind to truth, nor the reading many books, nor the getting up many subjects, nor the witnessing many experiments, nor the attending many lectures. All this is short of enough; a man may have done it all, yet be lingering in the vestibule of knowledge: he may not realize what his mouth utters; he may not see with his mental eye what confronts him; he may have no grasp of things as they are; or at least he may have no power at all of advancing one step forward of himself, in consequence of what he has already acquired, no power of discriminating between truth and falsehood, of sifting out the grains of truth from the mass, of arranging things according to their real value, and, if I may use the phrase, of building up ideas. Such a power is the result of a scientific formation of mind; it is an acquired faculty of judgment, of clear-sightedness, of sagacity, of wisdom, of philosophical reach of mind, and of intellectual self-possession and repose—qualities which do not come of mere acquirement. The

bodily eye, the organ for apprehending material objects, is provided by nature; the eye of the mind, of which the object is truth, is the work of discipline and habit.

This process of training, by which the intellect, instead of being formed or sacrificed to some particular or accidental purpose, some specific trade or profession, or study or science, is disciplined for its own sake, for the perception of its own proper object, and for its own highest culture, is called liberal education; and though there is no one in whom it is carried as far as is conceivable, or whose intellect would be a pattern of what intellects should be made, yet there is scarcely any one but may gain an idea of what real training is, and at least look towards it, and make its true scope and result, not something else, his standard of excellence; and numbers there are who may submit themselves to it, and secure it to themselves in good measure. And to set forth the right standard, and to train according to it, and to help forward all students towards it according to their various capacities, this I conceive to be the business of a university.

Now this is what some great men are very slow to allow; they insist that education should be confined to some particular and narrow end, and should issue in some definite work, which can be weighed and measured. They argue as if everything, as well as every person, had its price; and that where there has been a great outlay, they have a right to expect a return in kind. This they call making education and instruction “useful,” and “utility” becomes their watchword. With a fundamental principle of this nature, they very naturally go on to ask, what there is to show for the expense of a university; what is the real worth in the market of the article called “a liberal education,” on the supposition that it does not teach us definitely how to advance our manufactures, or to improve our lands, or to better our civil economy; or again, if it does not at once make this man a lawyer, that an engineer, and that a surgeon; or at least if it does not lead to discoveries in chemistry, astronomy, geology, magnetism, and science of every kind.

This question, as might have been expected, has been keenly debated in the

present age, and formed one main subject of the controversy, to which I referred in the Introduction to the present Discourses, as having been sustained in the first decade of this century by a celebrated Northern Review¹ on the one hand, and defenders of the University of Oxford on the other. Hardly had the authorities of that ancient seat of learning, waking from their long neglect, set on foot a plan for the education of the youth committed to them, than the representatives of science and literature in the city, which has sometimes been called the Northern Athens,² remonstrated with their gravest arguments and their most brilliant satire, against the direction and shape which the reform was taking. Nothing would content them, but that the University should be set to rights on the basis of the philosophy of utility; a philosophy, as they seem to have thought, which needed but to be proclaimed in order to be embraced. In truth, they were little aware of the depth and force of the principles on which the authorities academical were proceeding, and, this being so, it was not to be expected that they would be allowed to walk at leisure over the field of controversy which they had selected. Accordingly they were encountered in behalf of the university by two men of great name and influence in their day, of very different minds, but united, as by collegiate ties, so in the clear-sighted and large view which they took of the whole subject of liberal education; and the defense thus provided for the Oxford studies has kept its ground to this day.

Let me be allowed to devote a few words to the memory of distinguished persons, under the shadow of whose name I once lived, and by whose doctrine I am now profiting. In the heart of Oxford there is a small plot of ground, hemmed in by public thoroughfares, which has been the possession and the home of one society for above five hundred years. In the old time of Boniface the Eighth and John the Twenty-second, in the age of Scotus and Occam and Dante,³ be-

fore Wiclif or Huss had kindled those miserable fires which are still raging to the ruin of the highest interests of man, an unfortunate king of England, Edward the Second,⁴ flying from the field of Bannockburn, is said to have made a vow to the Blessed Virgin to found a religious house in her honor, if he got back in safety. Prompted and aided by his almoner, he decided on placing this house in the city of Alfred; and the Image of our Lady, which is opposite its entrance-gate, is the token of the vow and its fulfillment to this day. King and almoner have long been in the dust, and strangers have entered into their inheritance, and their creed has been forgotten, and their holy rites disowned; but day by day a memento is still made in the holy Sacrifice by at least one Catholic priest, once a member of that college, for the souls of those Catholic benefactors who fed him there for so many years.⁵ The visitor, whose curiosity has been excited by its present fame, gazes perhaps with something of disappointment on a collection of buildings which have with them so few of the circumstances of dignity or wealth. Broad quadrangles, high halls and chambers, ornamented cloisters, stately walks, or umbrageous gardens, a throng of students, ample revenues, or a glorious history, none of these things were the portion of that old Catholic foundation; nothing in short which to the common eye sixty years ago would have given tokens of what it was to be. But it had at that time a spirit working within it, which enabled its inmates to do, amid its seeming insignificance, what no other body in the place could equal; not a very abstruse gift or extraordinary boast, but a rare one, the honest purpose to administer the trust committed to them in such a way as their conscience pointed out as best. So, whereas the Colleges of Oxford are self-electing bodies, the fellows in each perpetually filling up for themselves the vacancies which occur in their number, the members of this foundation determined, at a time when, either from evil custom or from ancient statute, such a thing was not known elsewhere, to throw open their fellowships to the competition of all

¹The *Edinburgh Review*. ²Edinburgh.

³*I.e.*, towards the close of the Middle Age, in the opening years of the fourteenth century. Boniface and John were popes, Scotus and Occam scholastic philosophers. Wiclif and Huss contributed to bring about the Protestant Reformation.

⁴Born in 1284, reigned from 1307, murdered in 1327. The Battle of Bannockburn was fought in 1314. Edward founded Oriel College.

⁵Newman's allusion is, of course, to himself.

comers, and, in the choice of associates henceforth, to cast to the winds every personal motive and feeling, family connection, and friendship, and patronage, and political interest, and local claim, and prejudice, and party jealousy, and to elect solely on public and patriotic grounds. Nay, with a remarkable independence of mind, they resolved that even the table of honors, awarded to literary merit by the University in its new system of examination for degrees, should not fetter their judgment as electors; but that at all risks, and whatever criticism it might cause, and whatever odium they might incur, they would select the men, whoever they were, to be children of their founder, whom they thought in their consciences to be most likely from their intellectual and moral qualities to please him, if (as they expressed it) he were still upon earth, most likely to do honor to his College, most likely to promote the objects which they believed he had at heart. Such persons did not promise to be the disciples of a low utilitarianism; and consequently, as their collegiate reform synchronized with that reform of the academical body, in which they bore a principal part, it was not unnatural that, when the storm broke upon the University from the North, their *alma mater*, whom they loved, should have found her first defenders within the walls of that small College, which had first put itself into a condition to be her champion.

These defenders, gentlemen, I have said, were two, of whom the more distinguished was the late Dr. Copleston, then a Fellow of the College, successively its Provost, and Protestant Bishop of Llandaff. In that society, which owes so much to him, his name lives, and ever will live, for the distinction which his talents bestowed on it, for the academical importance to which he raised it, for the generosity of spirit, the liberality of sentiment, and the kindness of heart, with which he adorned it, and which even those who had least sympathy with some aspects of his mind and character could not but admire and love. Men come to their meridian at various periods of their lives; the last years of the eminent person I am speaking of were given to duties which, I am told, have been the means of endearing him to numbers, but which afforded no scope for

that peculiar vigor and keenness of mind which enabled him, when a young man, single-handed, with easy gallantry, to encounter and overthrow the charge of three giants of the North combined against him.¹ I believe I am right in saying that, in the progress of the controversy, the most scientific, the most critical, and the most witty, of that literary company, all of them now, as he himself, removed from this visible scene, Professor Playfair, Lord Jeffrey, and the Rev. Sydney Smith, threw together their several efforts into one article of their review, in order to crush and pound to dust the audacious controvertist who had come out against them in defense of his own institutions. To have even contended with such men was a sufficient voucher for his ability, even before we open his pamphlets, and have actual evidence of the good sense, the spirit, the scholar-like taste, and the purity of style, by which they are distinguished.

He was supported in the controversy, on the same general principles, but with more of method and distinctness, and, I will add, with greater force and beauty and perfection, both of thought and of language, by the other distinguished writer, to whom I have already referred, Mr. Davison; who, though not so well known to the world in his day, has left more behind him than the Provost of Oriel, to make his name remembered by posterity. This thoughtful man, who was the admired and intimate friend of a very remarkable person, whom, whether he wish it or not, numbers revere and love as the first author of the subsequent movement in the Protestant Church towards Catholicism,² this grave and philosophical writer, whose works I can never look into without sighing that such a man was lost to the Catholic Church, as Dr. Butler³ before him, by some early bias or some fault of self-education—he, in a review of a work by Mr. Edgeworth on Professional Education, which attracted a good deal of attention in its day, goes leisurely over the same ground,

¹Newman alludes to Copleston's activity in church restoration in Wales.

²Mr. Keble, Vicar of Hursley, late Fellow of Oriel, and Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford (Newman's note).

³Bishop Joseph Butler (1692-1752), author of the *Analogy of Religion*.

which had already been rapidly traversed by Dr. Copleston, and, though professedly employed upon Mr. Edgeworth, is really replying to the northern critic who had brought that writer's work into notice, and to a far greater author than either of them, who in a past age had argued on the same side.¹

The author to whom I allude is no other than Locke.² That celebrated philosopher has preceded the Edinburgh Reviewers in condemning the ordinary subjects in which boys are instructed at school, on the ground that they are not needed by them in after life; and before quoting what his disciples have said in the present century, I will refer to a few passages of the master. "'Tis matter of astonishment," he says in his work on education, "that men of quality and parts should suffer themselves to be so far misled by custom and implicit faith. Reason, if consulted with, would advise, that their children's time should be spent in acquiring what might be useful to them, when they come to be men, rather than that their heads should be stuffed with a deal of trash, a great part whereof they usually never do ('tis certain they never need to) think on again as long as they live; and so much of it as does stick by them they are only the worse for."

And so again, speaking of verse-making, he says: "I know not what reason a father can have to wish his son a poet, who does not desire him to bid defiance to all other callings and business; which is not yet the worst of the case; for, if he proves a successful rhymers, and gets once the reputation of a wit, I desire it to be considered, what company and places he is likely to spend his time in, nay, and estate too; for it is very seldom

seen that any one discovers mines of gold or silver in Parnassus. 'Tis a pleasant air but a barren soil."

In another passage he distinctly limits utility in education to its bearing on the future profession or trade of the pupil, that is, he scorns the idea of any education of the intellect, simply as such. "Can there be anything more ridiculous," he asks, "than that a father should waste his own money, and his son's time, in setting him to learn the Roman language, when at the same time he designs him for a trade, wherein he, having no use of Latin, fails not to forget that little which he brought from school, and which 'tis ten to one he abhors for the ill-usage it procured him? Could it be believed, unless we have everywhere amongst us examples of it, that a child should be forced to learn the rudiments of language, which he is never to use in the course of life that he is designed to, and neglect all the while the writing a good hand, and casting accounts, which are of great advantage in all conditions of life, and to most trades indispensably necessary?"³ Nothing of course can be more absurd than to neglect in education those matters which are necessary for a boy's future calling; but the tone of Locke's remarks evidently implies more than this, and is condemnatory of any teaching which tends to the general cultivation of the mind.

Now to turn to his modern disciples. The study of the classics has been made the basis of the Oxford education, in the reforms which I have spoken of, and the Edinburgh Reviewers protested, after the manner of Locke, that no good could come of a system which was not based upon the principle of utility.

"Classical literature," they said, "is the great object at Oxford. Many minds, so employed, have produced many works and much fame in that department; but if all liberal arts and sciences, useful to human life, had been taught there, if some had dedicated themselves to chemistry, some to mathematics, some to experimental philosophy, and if every attainment had been honored in the mixed ratio of its difficulty and utility, the system of such a university would have been much more valuable, but the splendor of its name something less."

¹Edgeworth's *Essays on Professional Education* were reviewed in the *Edinburgh* in October, 1809 (Vol. XV, p. 40), and the review was made the occasion for an attack on Oxford for its neglect of "useful knowledge." In 1810 Copleston answered the *Edinburgh* in a pamphlet entitled *A Reply to the Calumnies of the Edinburgh Review against Oxford*. Copleston also published a *Second Reply* and a *Third Reply* in this and the following year. Meanwhile in April, 1810, the *Edinburgh* (XVI, 158) published a reply to Copleston, which Newman believed to have been written by Playfair, Jeffrey, and Sydney Smith. Davison's paper on Edgeworth's *Essays* was published in the *Quarterly Review* for October, 1811 (VI, 166).

²John Locke (1632-1704), author of the *Essay Concerning the Human Understanding*.

³These quotations are from Locke's tract *Of Education*, Sections 94, 174, and 164.

Utility may be made the end of education, in two respects; either as regards the individual educated, or the community at large. In which light do these writers regard it? in the latter. So far they differ from Locke, for they consider the advancement of science as the supreme and real end of a university. This is brought into view in the sentences which follow.

"When a university has been doing useless things for a long time, it appears at first degrading to them to be useful. A set of lectures on political economy would be discouraged in Oxford, probably despised, probably not permitted. To discuss the inclosure of commons, and to dwell upon imports and exports, to come so near to common life, would seem to be undignified and contemptible. In the same manner, the Parr or the Bentley¹ of the day would be scandalized, in a university, to be put on a level with the discoverer of a neutral salt; and yet, what other measure is there of dignity in intellectual labor but usefulness? And what ought the term university to mean, but a place where every science is taught which is liberal, and at the same time useful to mankind? Nothing would so much tend to bring classical literature within proper bounds as a steady and invariable appeal to utility in our appreciation of all human knowledge. . . . Looking always to real utility as our guide, we should see, with equal pleasure, a studious and inquisitive mind arranging the productions of nature, investigating the qualities of bodies, or mastering the difficulties of the learned languages. We should not care whether he was chemist, naturalist, or scholar, because we know it to be as necessary that matter should be studied and subdued to the use of man, as that taste should be gratified, and imagination inflamed."

Such then is the enunciation, as far as words go, of the theory of utility in education; and both on its own account, and for the sake of the able men who have advocated it, it has a claim on the attention of those whose principles I am here representing. Certainly it is specious to contend that nothing is worth pursuing but what is useful; and that life is not long enough to expend upon interesting, or curious, or brilliant

trifles. Nay, in one sense, I will grant it is more than specious, it is true; but, if so, how do I propose directly to meet the objection? Why, gentlemen, I have really met it already, *viz.*, in laying down that intellectual culture is its own end; for what has its end in itself, has its use in itself also. I say, if a liberal education consists in the culture of the intellect, and if that culture be in itself a good, here, without going further, is an answer to Locke's question; for if a healthy body is a good in itself, why is not a healthy intellect? and if a college of physicians is a useful institution, because it contemplates bodily health, why is not an academical body, though it were simply and solely engaged in imparting vigor and beauty and grasp to the intellectual portion of our nature? And the Reviewers I am quoting seem to allow this in their better moments, in a passage which, putting aside the question of its justice in fact, is sound and true in the principles to which it appeals:—

The present state of classical education [they say] cultivates the imagination a great deal too much, and other habits of mind a great deal too little, and trains up many young men in a style of elegant imbecility, utterly unworthy of the talents with which nature has endowed them. . . . The matter of fact is, that a classical scholar of twenty-three or twenty-four is a man principally conversant with works of imagination. His feelings are quick, his fancy lively, and his taste good. Talents for speculation and original inquiry he has none, nor has he formed the invaluable habit of pushing things up to their first principles, or of collecting dry and unamusing facts as the materials for reasoning. All the solid and masculine parts of his understanding are left wholly without cultivation; he hates the pain of thinking, and suspects every man whose boldness and originality call upon him to defend his opinions and prove his assertions.

Now, I am not at present concerned with the specific question of classical education; else I might reasonably question the justice of calling an intellectual discipline, which embraces the study of Aristotle, Thucydides, and Tacitus, which involves scholarship and antiquities, imaginative; still so far I readily grant, that the cultivation of the "understanding," of a "talent for speculation and original inquiry," and of "the habit of pushing things up to their first principles," is a

¹Classical scholars.

principal portion of a good or liberal education. If then the Reviewers consider such cultivation the characteristic of a useful education, as they seem to do in the foregoing passage, it follows that what they mean by "useful" is just what I mean by "good" or "liberal": and Locke's question becomes a verbal one. Whether youths are to be taught Latin or verse-making will depend on the fact, whether these studies tend to mental culture; but, however this is determined, so far is clear, that in that mental culture consists what I have called a liberal or non-professional, and what the Reviewers call a useful education.

This is the obvious answer which may be made to those who urge upon us the claims of utility in our plans of education; but I am not going to leave the subject here: I mean to take a wider view of it. Let us take "useful," as Locke takes it, in its proper and popular sense, and then we enter upon a large field of thought, to which I cannot do justice in one Discourse, though to-day's is all the space that I can give to it. I say, let us take "useful" to mean, not what is simply good, but what tends to good, or is the instrument of good; and in this sense also, gentlemen, I will show you how a liberal education is truly and fully a useful, though it be not a professional education. "Good" indeed means one thing, and "useful" means another; but I lay it down as a principle, which will save us a great deal of anxiety, that, though the useful is not always good, the good is always useful. Good is not only good, but reproductive of good; this is one of its attributes; nothing is excellent, beautiful, perfect, desirable for its own sake, but it overflows, and spreads the likeness of itself all around itself. Good is prolific; it is not only good to the eye, but to the taste; it not only attracts us, but it communicates itself; it excites first our admiration and love, then our desire and our gratitude, and that, in proportion to its intenseness and fullness in particular instances. A great good will impart great good. If then the intellect is so excellent a portion of us, and its cultivation so excellent, it is not only beautiful, perfect, admirable, and noble in itself, but in a true and high sense it must be useful to the possessor and to all around him; not useful in any low, mechanical, mercantile sense, but as

diffusing good, or as a blessing, or a gift, or power, or a treasure, first to the owner, then through him to the world. I say then, if a liberal education be good, it must necessarily be useful too.

You will see what I mean by the parallel of bodily health. Health is a good in itself, though nothing came of it, and is especially worth seeking and cherishing; yet, after all, the blessings which attend its presence are so great, while they are so close to it and so redound back upon it and encircle it, that we never think of it except as useful as well as good, and praise and prize it for what it does, as well as for what it is, though at the same time we cannot point out any definite and distinct work or production which it can be said to effect. And so as regards intellectual culture, I am far from denying utility in this large sense as the end of education, when I lay it down, that the culture of the intellect is a good in itself and its own end; I do not exclude from the idea of intellectual culture what it cannot but be, from the very nature of things; I only deny that we must be able to point out, before we have any right to call it useful, some art, or business, or profession, or trade, or work as resulting from it, and as its real and complete end. The parallel is exact:—As the body may be sacrificed to some manual or other toil, whether moderate or oppressive, so may the intellect be devoted to some specific profession; and I do not call *this* the culture of the intellect. Again, as some member or organ of the body may be inordinately used and developed, so may memory, or imagination, or the reasoning faculty; and *this* again is not intellectual culture. On the other hand, as the body may be tended, cherished, and exercised with a simple view to its general health, so may the intellect also be generally exercised in order to its perfect state; and this *is* its cultivation.

Again, as health ought to precede labor of the body, and as a man in health can do what an unhealthy man cannot do, and as of this health the properties are strength, energy, agility, graceful carriage and action, manual dexterity, and endurance of fatigue, so in like manner general culture of mind is the best aid to professional and scientific study, and educated men can do what illiterate cannot; and the man who has learned to

think and to reason and to compare and to discriminate and to analyse, who has refined his taste, and formed his judgment, and sharpened his mental vision, will not indeed at once be a lawyer, or a pleader, or an orator, or a statesman, or a physician, or a good landlord, or a man of business, or a soldier, or an engineer, or a chemist, or a geologist, or an antiquarian, but he will be placed in that state of intellect in which he can take up any one of the sciences or callings I have referred to, or any other for which he has a taste or special talent, with an ease, a grace, a versatility, and a success, to which another is a stranger. In this sense then, and as yet I have said but a very few words on a large subject, mental culture is emphatically useful.

If then I am arguing, and shall argue, against professional or scientific knowledge as the sufficient end of a university education, let me not be supposed, gentlemen, to be disrespectful towards particular studies, or arts, or vocations, and those who are engaged in them. In saying that law or medicine is not the end of a university course, I do not mean to imply that the university does not teach law or medicine. What indeed can it teach at all, if it does not teach something particular? It teaches *all* knowledge by teaching all branches of knowledge, and in no other way. I do but say that there will be this distinction as regards a professor of law, or of medicine, or of geology, or of political economy, in a university and out of it, that out of a university he is in danger of being absorbed and narrowed by his pursuit and of giving lectures which are the lectures of nothing more than a lawyer, physician, geologist, or political economist; whereas in a university he will just know where he and his science stand, he has come to it, as it were, from a height, he has taken a survey of all knowledge, he is kept from extravagance by the very rivalry of other studies, he has gained from them a special illumination and largeness of mind and freedom and self-possession, and he treats his own in consequence with a philosophy and a resource, which belongs not to the study itself, but to his liberal education.

This then is how I should solve the fallacy, for so I must call it, by which Locke and his disciples would frighten us from cultivating

the intellect, under the notion that no education is useful which does not teach us some temporal calling, or some mechanical art, or some physical secret. I say that a cultivated intellect, because it is a good in itself, brings with it a power and a grace to every work and occupation which it undertakes, and enables us to be more useful, and to a greater number. There is a duty we owe to human society as such, to the state to which we belong, to the sphere in which we move, to the individuals towards whom we are variously related, and whom we successively encounter in life; and that philosophical or liberal education, as I have called it, which is the proper function of a university, if it refuses the foremost place to professional interests, does but postpone them to the formation of the citizen, and while it subserves the larger interests of philanthropy, prepares also for the successful prosecution of those merely personal objects which at first sight it seems to disparage.

And now, gentlemen, I wish to be allowed to enforce in detail what I have been saying by some extracts from the writings to which I have already alluded, and to which I am so greatly indebted:

It is an undisputed maxim in political economy [says Dr. Copleston] that the separation of professions and the division of labor tend to the perfection of every art, to the wealth of nations, to the general comfort and well-being of the community. This principle of division is in some instances pursued so far as to excite the wonder of people to whose notice it is for the first time pointed out. There is no saying to what extent it may not be carried; and the more the powers of each individual are concentrated in one employment, the greater skill and quickness will he naturally display in performing it. But, while he thus contributes more effectually to the accumulation of national wealth, he becomes himself more and more degraded as a rational being. In proportion as his sphere of action is narrowed his mental powers and habits become contracted; and he resembles a subordinate part of some powerful machinery, useful in its place, but insignificant and worthless out of it. If it be necessary, as it is beyond all question necessary, that society should be split into divisions and subdivisions, in order that its several duties may be well performed, yet we must be careful not to yield up ourselves wholly and exclusively to the guidance of this system; we must observe what its evils are, and we should modify and restrain it,

by bringing into action other principles, which may serve as a check and counterpoise to the main force.

There can be no doubt that every art is improved by confining the professor of it to that single study. But, although the art itself is advanced by this concentration of mind in its service, the individual who is confined to it goes back. The advantage of the community is nearly in an inverse ratio with his own.

Society itself requires some other contribution from each individual, besides the particular duties of his profession. And, if no such liberal intercourse be established, it is the common failing of human nature, to be engrossed with petty views and interests, to underrate the importance of all in which we are not concerned, and to carry our partial notions into cases where they are inapplicable, to act, in short, as so many unconnected units, displacing and repelling one another.

In the cultivation of literature is found that common link, which, among the higher and middling departments of life, unites the jarring sects and subdivisions into one interest, which supplies common topics, and kindles common feelings, unmingled with those narrow prejudices with which all professions are more or less infected. The knowledge, too, which is thus acquired, expands and enlarges the mind, excites its faculties, and calls those limbs and muscles into freer exercise which, by too constant use in one direction, not only acquire an illiberal air, but are apt also to lose somewhat of their native play and energy. And thus, without directly qualifying a man for any of the employments of life, it enriches and ennobles all. Without teaching him the peculiar business of any one office or calling, it enables him to act his part in each of them with better grace and more elevated carriage; and, if happily planned and conducted, is a main ingredient in that complete and generous education which fits a man "to perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously, all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war."¹

The view of liberal education, advocated in these extracts, is expanded by Mr. Davison in the essay to which I have already referred. He lays more stress on the "usefulness" of liberal education in the larger sense of the word than his predecessor in the controversy. Instead of arguing that the utility of knowledge to the individual varies inversely with its utility to the public, he chiefly employs himself on the suggestions contained in Dr. Copleston's last sentences. He shows, first, that a liberal educa-

tion is something far higher, even in the scale of utility, than what is commonly called a useful education, and next, that it is necessary or useful for the purposes even of that professional education which commonly engrosses the title of useful. The former of these two theses he recommends to us in an argument from which the following passages are selected:

It is to take a very contracted view of life [he says] to think with great anxiety how persons may be educated to superior skill in their department, comparatively neglecting or excluding the more liberal and enlarged cultivation. In his (Mr. Edgeworth's) system, the value of every attainment is to be measured by its subserviency to a calling. The specific duties of that calling are exalted at the cost of those free and independent tastes and virtues which come in to sustain the common relations of society, and raise the individual in them. In short, a man is to be usurped by his profession. He is to be clothed in its garb from head to foot. His virtues, his science, and his ideas are all to be put into a gown or uniform, and the whole man to be shaped, pressed, and stifened, in the exact mold of his technical character. Any interloping accomplishments or a faculty which cannot be taken into public pay, if they are to be indulged in him at all, must creep along under the cloak of his more serviceable privileged merits. Such is the state of perfection to which the spirit and general tendency of this system would lead us.

But the professional character is not the only one which a person engaged in a profession has to support. He is not always upon duty. There are services he owes, which are neither parochial, nor forensic, nor military, nor to be described by any such epithet of civil regulation, and yet are in nowise inferior to those that bear these authoritative titles; inferior neither in their intrinsic value, nor their moral import, nor their impression upon society. As a friend, as a companion, as a citizen at large; in the connections of domestic life; in the improvement and embellishment of his leisure, he has a sphere of action, revolving, if you please, within the sphere of his profession, but not clashing with it; in which if he can show none of the advantages of an improved understanding, whatever may be his skill or proficiency in the other, he is no more than an ill-educated man.

There is a certain faculty in which all nations of any refinement are great practitioners. It is not taught at school or college as a distinct science; though it deserves that what is taught there should be made to have some reference to it; nor is it endowed at all by the public; everybody being obliged to exercise it for himself in person, which

¹Vid. Milton on Education (Newman's note).

he does to the best of his skill. But in nothing is there a greater difference than in the manner of doing it. The advocates of professional learning will smile when we tell them that this same faculty which we would have encouraged, is simply that of speaking good sense in English, without fee or reward, in common conversation. They will smile when we lay some stress upon it; but in reality it is no such trifle as they imagine. Look into the huts of savages, and see, for there is nothing to listen to, the dismal blank of their stupid hours of silence; their professional avocations of war and hunting are over; and, having nothing to do, they have nothing to say. Turn to improved life, and you find conversation in all its forms the medium of something more than an idle pleasure; indeed, a very active agent in circulating and forming the opinions, tastes, and feelings of a whole people. It makes of itself a considerable affair. Its topics are the most promiscuous—all those which do not belong to any particular province. As for its power and influence, we may fairly say that it is of just the same consequence to a man's immediate society, how he talks, as how he acts. Now of all those who furnish their share to rational conversation, a mere adept in his own art is universally admitted to be the worst. The sterility and uninterestingness of such a person's social hours are quite proverbial. Or if he escape being dull, it is only by launching into ill-timed, learned loquacity. We do not desire of him lectures or speeches; and he has nothing else to give. Among benches he may be powerful; but seated on a chair he is quite another person. On the other hand, we may affirm, that one of the best companions is a man who, to the accuracy and research of a profession, has joined a free excursive acquaintance with various learning, and caught from it the spirit of general observation.

Having thus shown that a liberal education is a real benefit to the subjects of it, as members of society, in the various duties and circumstances and accidents of life, he goes on, in the next place, to show that, over and above those direct services which might fairly be expected of it, it actually subverts the discharge of those particular functions, and the pursuit of those particular advantages, which are connected with professional exertion, and to which professional education is directed:

We admit [he observes] that when a person makes a business of one pursuit, he is in the right way to eminence in it; and that divided attention will rarely give excellence in many. But our assent will go no further. For, to think that the

way to prepare a person for excelling in any one pursuit (and that is the only point in hand), is to fetter his early studies, and cramp the first development of his mind, by a reference to the exigencies of that pursuit barely, is a very different notion, and one which, we apprehend, deserves to be exploded rather than received. Possibly a few of the abstract insulated kinds of learning might be approached in that way. The exceptions to be made are very few, and need not be recited. But for the acquisition of professional and practical ability such maxims are death to it. The main ingredients of that ability are requisite knowledge and cultivated faculties; but, of the two, the latter is by far the chief. A man of well-improved faculties has the command of another's knowledge. A man without them, has not the command of his own.

Of the intellectual powers, the judgment is that which takes the foremost lead in life. How to form it to the two habits it ought to possess, of exactness and vigor, is the problem. It would be ignorant presumption so much as to hint at any routine of method by which these qualities may with certainty be imparted to every or any understanding. Still, however, we may safely lay it down that they are not to be got "by a gatherer of simples," but are the combined essence and extracts of many different things, drawn from much varied reading and discipline, first, and observation afterwards. For if there be a single intelligible point on this head, it is that a man who has been trained to think upon one subject or for one subject only, will never be a good judge even in that one: whereas the enlargement of his circle gives him increased knowledge and power in a rapidly increasing ratio. So much do ideas act, not as solitary units, but by grouping and combination; and so clearly do all the things that fall within the proper province of the same faculty of the mind, intertwine with and support each other. Judgment lives as it were by comparison and discrimination. Can it be doubted, then, whether the range and extent of that assemblage of things upon which it is practised in its first essays are of use to its power?

To open our way a little further on this matter, we will define what we mean by the power of judgment; and then try to ascertain among what kind of studies the improvement of it may be expected at all.

Judgment does not stand here for a certain homely, useful quality of intellect, that guards a person from committing mistakes to the injury of his fortunes or common reputation; but for that master-principle of business, literature, and talent, which gives him strength in any subject he chooses to grapple with, and enables him to seize the strong point in it. Whether this definition be metaphysically correct or not, it comes home to

the substance of our inquiry. It describes the power that every one desires to possess when he comes to act in a profession, or elsewhere; and corresponds with our best idea of a cultivated mind.

Next, it will not be denied, that in order to do any good to the judgment, the mind must be employed upon such subjects as come within the cognizance of that faculty, and give some real exercise to its perceptions. Here we have a rule of selection by which the different parts of learning may be classed for our purpose. Those which belong to the province of the judgment are religion (in its evidences and interpretation), ethics, history, eloquence, poetry, theories of general speculation, the fine arts, and works of wit. Great as the variety of these large divisions of learning may appear, they are all held in union by two capital principles of connection. First, they are all quarried out of one and the same great subject of man's moral, social, and feeling nature. And secondly, they are all under the control (more or less strict) of the same power of moral reason.

If these studies [he continues] be such as give a direct play and exercise to the faculty of the judgment, then they are the true basis of education for the active and inventive powers, whether destined for a profession or any other use. Miscellaneous as the assemblage may appear, of history, eloquence, poetry, ethics, *etc.*, blended together, they will all conspire in an union of effect. They are necessary mutually to explain and interpret each other. The knowledge derived from them all will amalgamate, and the habits of a mind versed and practised in them by turns will join to produce a richer vein of thought and of more general and practical application than could be obtained of any single one, as the fusion of the metals into Corinthian brass gave the artist his most ductile and perfect material. Might we venture to imitate an author (whom indeed it is much safer to take as an authority than to attempt to copy), Lord Bacon, in some of his concise illustrations of the comparative utility of the different studies,¹ we should say that history would give fullness, moral philosophy strength, and poetry elevation to the understanding. Such in reality is the natural force and tendency of the studies; but there are few minds susceptible enough to derive from them any sort of virtue adequate to those high expressions. We must be contented therefore to lower our panegyric to this, that a person cannot avoid receiving some infusion and tincture, at least, of those several qualities, from that course of diversified reading. One thing is unquestionable, that the elements of general reason are not to be found fully and truly expressed in any one kind of study; and that he who would wish to know her idiom, must read it in many books.

If different studies are useful for aiding, they are still more useful for correcting each other; for as they have their particular merits severally, so they have their defects, and the most extensive acquaintance with one can produce only an intellect either too flashy or too jejune, or infected with some other fault of confined reading. History, for example, shows things as they are, that is, the morals and interests of men disfigured and perverted by all their imperfections of passion, folly, and ambition; philosophy strips the picture too much; poetry adorns it too much; the concentrated lights of the three correct the false peculiar coloring of each, and show us the truth. The right mode of thinking upon it is to be had from them taken all together, as every one must know who has seen their united contributions of thought and feeling expressed in the masculine sentiment of our immortal statesman, Mr. Burke,² whose eloquence is inferior only to his more admirable wisdom. If any mind improved like his, is to be our instructor, we must go to the fountain head of things as he did, and study not his works but his method; by the one we may become feeble imitators, by the other arrive at some ability of our own. But, as all biography assures us, he, and every other able thinker, has been formed, not by a parsimonious admeasurement of studies to some definite future object (which is Mr. Edgeworth's maxim), but by taking a wide and liberal compass, and thinking a great deal on many subjects with no better end in view than because the exercise was one which made them more rational and intelligent beings.

But I must bring these extracts to an end. To-day I have confined myself to saying that that training of the intellect, which is best for the individual himself, best enables him to discharge his duties to society. The philosopher, indeed, and the man of the world differ in their very notion, but the methods by which they are respectively formed are pretty much the same. The philosopher has the same command of matters of thought, which the true citizen and gentleman has of matters of business and conduct. If then a practical end must be assigned to a university course, I say it is that of training good members of society. Its art is the art of social life, and its end is fitness for the world. It neither confines its views to particular professions on the one hand, nor creates heroes or inspires genius on the other. Works indeed of genius fall under no art; heroic minds come under no

¹See Bacon's essay, *Of Studies*.

²Edmund Burke (1729-1797).

rule; a university is not a birthplace of poets or of immortal authors, of founders of schools, leaders of colonies, or conquerors of nations. It does not promise a generation of Aristotles or Newtons, of Napoleons or Washingtons, of Raphaels or Shakespeares, though such miracles of nature it has before now contained within its precincts. Nor is it content on the other hand with forming the critic or the experimentalist, the economist or the engineer, though such too it includes within its scope. But a university training is the great ordinary means to a great but ordinary end; it aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at supplying true principles to popular enthusiasm and fixed aims to popular aspiration, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power, and refining the intercourse of private life. It is the education which gives a man a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them. It teaches him to see things as they are, to go right to the point, to disentangle a skein of thought, to detect what is sophistical, and to discard what is irrelevant. It prepares him to fill any post with credit, and to master any

subject with facility. It shows him how to accommodate himself to others, how to throw himself into their state of mind, how to bring before them his own, how to influence them, how to come to an understanding with them, how to bear with them. He is at home in any society, he has common ground with every class; he knows when to speak and when to be silent; he is able to converse, he is able to listen; he can ask a question pertinently, and gain a lesson seasonably, when he has nothing to impart himself; he is ever ready, yet never in the way; he is a pleasant companion, and a comrade you can depend upon; he knows when to be serious and when to trifle, and he has a sure tact which enables him to trifle with gracefulness and to be serious with effect. He has the repose of a mind which lives in itself, while it lives in the world, and which has resources for its happiness at home when it cannot go abroad. He has a gift which serves him in public, and supports him in retirement, without which good fortune is but vulgar, and with which failure and disappointment have a charm. The art which tends to make a man all this, is in the object which it pursues as useful as the art of wealth or the art of health, though it is less susceptible of method, and less tangible, less certain, less complete in its result.

THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY (1825-1895)

Huxley's father at the time of his son's birth, on 4 May, 1825, was senior assistant-master of a school at Ealing. He was not, apparently, a very competent man, and had no means with which to give his son a thorough education. Huxley himself wished to be a mechanical engineer, but instead, as the only practicable course open, after a rather haphazard elementary education, he was set to studying medicine under the direction of his brother-in-law, who was a physician. He completed his medical education at the Charing Cross Hospital Medical School, at the same time turning his attention, increasingly towards the close of his course of study, to the natural sciences. In 1845 he obtained his medical degree and a gold medal for anatomy and physiology from the University of London. In the following year he entered the Naval Medical Service and was appointed assistant-surgeon of the surveying ship *Rattlesnake*. This ship was bound on a voyage in which its major business was to chart a passage through reefs off the coast of Australia. The Admiralty recognized the opportunities for the advancement of natural science offered by its voyage, and not only did the ship carry an official naturalist, but Huxley's own appointment was the result of his scientific interests. During the four years of the *Rattlesnake's* voyage Huxley, by his observations and articles, laid the foundations of his career as a natural scientist, though, owing to the ship's remoteness and movements, he heard nothing until his return to England, in 1850, about the fate of the articles he kept sending back. The year after his return, however, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in recognition of the value of his work, and in 1852 he was awarded the Royal Society's Gold Medal. At the same time he complained bitterly that these were empty honors when he could find no position with an adequate salary which would enable him to continue his scientific work. But after several years, in 1854, he was appointed Professor of Natural History and Paleontology in the Royal School of Mines and Curator of Fossils in the Museum of Practical Geology, and these appointments set him on his feet. In 1855 he married Miss Henrietta Anne Heathorn, whom he had met in Australia. From this time on Huxley led an extremely busy life, partly because of what he considered the proper demands of science, and partly because he was constantly in need of money for the support of his growing family. He held a succession of important academic posts until his final retirement, he sat on ten royal commissions besides holding various other government positions, he administered the affairs of several scientific societies, and he did a great deal of popular or controversial writing and lecturing. As he grew older he attained a more than national eminence. In 1866 he received an honorary degree from Edinburgh University; in 1870 he was elected President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science; in 1871 he was appointed Secretary of the Royal Society; in 1872 he was elected Lord Rector of Aberdeen University; in 1879 he received an honorary degree from Cambridge; in 1883 he was elected President of the Royal Society; in 1885 he received the degree of D.C.L. from Oxford; and in 1892 he was made a Privy Councillor. He died on 29 June, 1895.

When Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published in 1859 and aroused a clerical, and to some extent a popular, uproar, Huxley immediately appeared as the champion of evolution. And thereafter he did less purely scientific work and devoted his time increasingly to controversial writing and popular lecturing in support of the theory of evolution and of the study of science in general. For this he was exceptionally fitted, as he had a quick and versatile mind and was the master of a vivid and energetic style. He himself came to recognize that here lay his true field. In an autobiographic sketch, speaking of his aims in life he said, "They are briefly these: To promote the increase of natural knowledge and to forward the application of scientific methods of investigation to all the problems of life to the best of my ability, in the conviction which has grown with my growth and strengthened with my strength, that there is no alleviation for the sufferings of mankind except veracity of thought and of action, and the resolute facing of the world as it is when the garment of make-believe by which pious hands have hidden its uglier features is stripped off. It is with this intent that I have subordinated any reasonable, or unreasonable, ambition for scientific fame which I may have permitted myself to entertain to other ends; to the popularization of science; to the development and organization of scientific education; to the endless series of battles and skirmishes over evolution; and to untiring opposition to that ecclesiastical spirit, that clericalism, which in England, as everywhere else, and to whatever denomination it may belong, is the deadly enemy of science."

ON THE ADVISABLENESS OF IMPROVING NATURAL KNOWLEDGE¹

THIS time two hundred years ago—in the beginning of January, 1666—those of our forefathers who inhabited this great and ancient city, took breath between the shocks of two fearful calamities: one not quite past, although its fury had abated; the other to come.

Within a few yards of the very spot on which we are assembled, so the tradition runs, that painful and deadly malady, the plague, appeared in the latter months of 1664; and, though no new visitor, smote the people of England, and especially of her capital, with a violence unknown before, in the course of the following year. The hand of a master has pictured what happened in those dismal months; and in that truest of fictions, *The History of the Plague Year*, Defoe shows death, with every accompaniment of pain and terror, stalking through the narrow streets of old London, and changing their busy hum into a silence broken only by the wailing of the mourners of fifty thousand dead; by the woeful denunciations and mad prayers of fanatics; and by the madder yells of despairing profligates.

But, about this time in 1666, the death-rate had sunk to nearly its ordinary amount; a case of plague occurred only here and there, and the richer citizens who had flown from the pest had returned to their dwellings. The remnant of the people began to toil at the accustomed round of duty, or of pleasure; and the stream of city life bid fair to flow back along its old bed, with renewed and uninterrupted vigor.

The newly-kindled hope was deceitful. The great plague, indeed, returned no more; but what it had done for the Londoners, the great fire, which broke out in the autumn of 1666, did for London; and, in September of that year, a heap of ashes and the indestructible energy of the people were all that re-

mained of the glory of five-sixths of the city within the walls.

Our forefathers had their own ways of accounting for each of these calamities. They submitted to the plague in humility and in penitence, for they believed it to be the judgment of God. But, towards the fire they were furiously indignant, interpreting it as the effect of the malice of man,—as the work of the Republicans, or of the Papists, according as their prepossessions ran in favor of loyalty or of Puritanism.

It would, I fancy, have fared but ill with one who, standing where I now stand, in what was then a thickly-peopled and fashionable part of London, should have broached to our ancestors the doctrine which I now propound to you—that all their hypotheses were alike wrong; that the plague was no more, in their sense, Divine judgment, than the fire was the work of any political, or of any religious, sect; but that they were themselves the authors of both plague and fire, and that they must look to themselves to prevent the recurrence of calamities, to all appearance so peculiarly beyond the reach of human control—so evidently the result of the wrath of God, or of the craft and subtlety of an enemy.

And one may picture to one's self how harmoniously the holy cursing of the Puritan of that day would have chimed in with the unholy cursing and the crackling wit of the Rochesters and Sedleys,² and with the revilings of the political fanatics, if my imaginary plain dealer had gone on to say that, if the return of such misfortunes were ever rendered impossible, it would not be in virtue of the victory of the faith of Laud,³ or of that of Milton; and, as little, by the triumph of republicanism, as by that of monarchy. But that the one thing needful for compassing this end was, that the people of England should second the efforts of an insignificant corporation, the establishment of which, a few years before the epoch of the great plague and the great fire, had been as little noticed, as they were conspicuous.

Some twenty years before the outbreak of the plague a few calm and thoughtful stu-

¹Delivered as a Lay Sermon in St. Martin's Hall, London, on 7 January, 1866. The essay was later published in the *Fortnightly Review* and was reprinted in *Methods and Results (Collected Essays, Vol. I)*. This and the two following essays are reprinted with the permission of the authorized publishers of Huxley's *Collected Essays*, Messrs. D. Appleton and Company.

²Dissolute wits of the Restoration era.

³William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, was born in 1573 and was beheaded by order of Parliament in 1645. He violently opposed puritanism.

dents banded themselves together for the purpose, as they phrased it, of "improving natural knowledge." The ends they proposed to attain cannot be stated more clearly than in the words of one of the founders of the organization:

Our business was (precluding matters of theology and state affairs) to discourse and consider of philosophical inquiries, and such as related thereunto:—as Physick, Anatomy, Geometry, Astronomy, Navigation, Staticks, Magneticks, Chymicks, Mechanicks, and Natural Experiments; with the state of these studies and their cultivation at home and abroad. We then discoursed of the circulation of the blood, the valves in the veins, the *venæ lacteæ*,¹ the lymphatic vessels, the Copernican hypothesis, the nature of comets and new stars, the satellites of Jupiter, the oval shape (as it then appeared) of Saturn, the spots on the sun and its turning on its own axis, the inequalities and selenography² of the moon, the several phases of Venus and Mercury, the improvement of telescopes and grinding of glasses for that purpose, the weight of air, the possibility or impossibility of vacuities and nature's abhorrence thereof, the Torricellian experiment in quicksilver,³ the descent of heavy bodies and the degree of acceleration therein, with divers other things of like nature, some of which were then but new discoveries, and others not so generally known and embraced as now they are; with other things appertaining to what hath been called the New Philosophy, which from the times of Galileo at Florence, and Sir Francis Bacon (Lord Verulam) in England, hath been much cultivated in Italy, France, Germany, and other parts abroad, as well as with us in England.

. The learned Dr. Wallis,⁴ writing in 1696, narrates in these words, what happened half a century before, or about 1645. The associates met at Oxford, in the rooms of Dr. Wilkins,⁵ who was destined to become a bishop; and subsequently coming together in London, they attracted the notice of the king. And it is a strange evidence of the taste for knowledge which the most obviously worthless of the Stuarts shared with his father and grandfather, that

Charles the Second was not content with saying witty things about his philosophers, but did wise things with regard to them. For he not only bestowed upon them such attention as he could spare from his poodles and his mistresses, but, being in his usual state of impecuniosity, begged for them of the Duke of Ormond; and, that step being without effect, gave them Chelsea College, a charter, and a mace: crowning his favors in the best way they could be crowned, by burdening them no further with royal patronage or state interference.

Thus it was that the half-dozen young men, studious of the "New Philosophy," who met in one another's lodgings in Oxford or in London, in the middle of the seventeenth century, grew in numerical and in real strength, until, in its latter part, the "Royal Society for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge" had already become famous, and had acquired a claim upon the veneration of Englishmen, which it has ever since retained, as the principal focus of scientific activity in our islands, and the chief champion of the cause it was formed to support.

It was by the aid of the Royal Society that Newton published his *Principia*. If all the books in the world, except the *Philosophical Transactions*, were destroyed, it is safe to say that the foundations of physical science would remain unshaken, and that the vast intellectual progress of the last two centuries would be largely, though incompletely, recorded. Nor have any signs of halting or of decrepitude manifested themselves in our own times. As in Dr. Wallis's days, so in these, "our business is, precluding theology and state affairs, to discourse and consider of philosophical inquiries." But our "Mathematick" is one which Newton would have to go to school to learn; our "Staticks, Mechanicks, Magneticks, Chymicks, and Natural Experiments" constitute a mass of physical and chemical knowledge, a glimpse at which would compensate Galileo for the doings of a score of inquisitorial cardinals;⁶ our "Physick" and "Anatomy" have embraced such infinite varieties of being, have laid open such new worlds in time and space, have grappled, not un-

¹Lacteal veins.

²Study or mapping of the moon.

³It demonstrated the principle of the barometer, discovered by Evangelista Torricelli (1608-1647), the Italian physicist.

⁴John Wallis (1616-1703), Oxford mathematician.

⁵John Wilkins (1614-1672) of Wadham College, Bishop of Chester.

⁶Galileo was forced by the Inquisition in 1633 to withdraw his support of the Copernican hypothesis.

successfully, with such complex problems, that the eyes of Vesalius and of Harvey¹ might be dazzled by the sight of the tree that has grown out of their grain of mustard seed.

The fact is perhaps rather too much, than too little, forced upon one's notice, nowadays, that all this marvelous intellectual growth has a no less wonderful expression in practical life; and that, in this respect, if in no other, the movement symbolized by the progress of the Royal Society stands without a parallel in the history of mankind.

A series of volumes as bulky as the *Transactions of the Royal Society* might possibly be filled with the subtle speculations of the Schoolmen;² not improbably, the obtaining a mastery over the products of medieval thought might necessitate an even greater expenditure of time and of energy than the acquirement of the "New Philosophy"; but though such work engrossed the best intellects of Europe for a longer time than has elapsed since the great fire, its effects were "writ in water," so far as our social state is concerned.

On the other hand, if the noble first President of the Royal Society could revisit the upper air and once more gladden his eyes with a sight of the familiar mace, he would find himself in the midst of a material civilization more different from that of his day, than that of the seventeenth was from that of the first century. And if Lord Brouncker's native sagacity had not deserted his ghost, he would need no long reflection to discover that all these great ships, these railways, these telegraphs, these factories, these printing-presses, without which the whole fabric of modern English society would collapse into a mass of stagnant and starving pauperism,—that all these pillars of our State are but the ripples and the bubbles upon the surface of that great spiritual stream, the springs of which only, he and his fellows were privileged to see; and seeing, to recognize as that which it behooved them above all things to keep pure and undefiled.

It may not be too great a flight of imagi-

nation to conceive our noble *revenant*³ not forgetful of the great troubles of his own day, and anxious to know how often London had been burned down since his time, and how often the plague had carried off its thousands. He would have to learn that, although London contains tenfold the inflammable matter that it did in 1666; though, not content with filling our rooms with woodwork and light draperies, we must needs lead inflammable and explosive gases into every corner of our streets and houses, we never allow even a street to burn down. And if he asked how this had come about, we should have to explain that the improvement of natural knowledge has furnished us with dozens of machines for throwing water upon fires, any one of which would have furnished the ingenious Mr. Hooke, the first "curator and experimenter" of the Royal Society, with ample materials for discourse before half a dozen meetings of that body; and that, to say truth, except for the progress of natural knowledge, we should not have been able to make even the tools by which these machines are constructed. And, further, it would be necessary to add, that although severe fires sometimes occur and inflict great damage, the loss is very generally compensated by societies, the operations of which have been rendered possible only by the progress of natural knowledge in the direction of mathematics, and the accumulation of wealth in virtue of other natural knowledge.

But the plague? My Lord Brouncker's observation would not, I fear, lead him to think that Englishmen of the nineteenth century are purer in life, or more fervent in religious faith, than the generation which could produce a Boyle, an Evelyn,⁴ and a Milton. He might find the mud of society at the bottom, instead of at the top, but I fear that the sum total would be as deserving of swift judgment as at the time of the Restoration. And it would be our duty to explain once more, and this time not without shame, that we have no reason to believe that it is the improvement of our faith, nor that of our morals, which keeps the plague from

¹Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564), anatomist, was one of the earliest to practise systematic dissection. William Harvey (1578-1657) discovered the circulation of the blood.

²Scholastic philosophers of the Middle Age.

³Ghost.

⁴Robert Boyle (1627-1691), chemist, and John Evelyn (1620-1706), diarist.

our city; but, again, that it is the improvement of our natural knowledge.

We have learned that pestilences will only take up their abode among those who have prepared unswept and ungarnished residences for them. Their cities must have narrow, unwatered streets, foul with accumulated garbage. Their houses must be ill-drained, ill-lighted, ill-ventilated. Their subjects must be ill-washed, ill-fed, ill-clothed. The London of 1665 was such a city. The cities of the East, where plague has an enduring dwelling, are such cities. We, in later times, have learned somewhat of Nature, and partly obey her. Because of this partial improvement of our natural knowledge and of that fractional obedience, we have no plague; because that knowledge is still very imperfect and that obedience yet incomplete, typhoid is our companion and cholera our visitor. But it is not presumptuous to express the belief that, when our knowledge is more complete and our obedience the expression of our knowledge, London will count her centuries of freedom from typhoid and cholera, as she now gratefully reckons her two hundred years of ignorance of that plague which swooped upon her thrice in the first half of the seventeenth century.

Surely, there is nothing in these explanations which is not fully borne out by the facts? Surely, the principles involved in them are now admitted among the fixed beliefs of all thinking men? Surely, it is true that our countrymen are less subject to fire, famine, pestilence, and all the evils which result from a want of command over and due anticipation of the course of Nature, than were the countrymen of Milton; and health, wealth, and well-being are more abundant with us than with them? But no less certainly is the difference due to the improvement of our knowledge of Nature, and the extent to which that improved knowledge has been incorporated with the household words of men, and has supplied the springs of their daily actions.

Granting for a moment, then, the truth of that which the depreciators of natural knowledge are so fond of urging, that its improvement can only add to the resources of our material civilization; admitting it to be possible that the founders of the Royal

Society themselves looked for no other reward than this, I cannot confess that I was guilty of exaggeration when I hinted, that to him who had the gift of distinguishing between prominent events and important events, the origin of a combined effort on the part of mankind to improve natural knowledge might have loomed larger than the Plague and have outshone the glare of the Fire; as a something fraught with a wealth of beneficence to mankind, in comparison with which the damage done by those ghastly evils would shrink into insignificance.

It is very certain that for every victim slain by the Plague, hundreds of mankind exist and find a fair share of happiness in the world by the aid of the spinning jenny. And the great Fire, at its worst, could not have burned the supply of coal, the daily working of which, in the bowels of the earth, made possible by the steam pump, gives rise to an amount of wealth to which the millions lost in old London are but as an old song.

But spinning jenny and steam pump are, after all, but toys, possessing an accidental value; and natural knowledge creates multitudes of more subtle contrivances, the praises of which do not happen to be sung because they are not directly convertible into instruments for creating wealth. When I contemplate natural knowledge squandering such gifts among men, the only appropriate comparison I can find for her is, to liken her to such a peasant woman as one sees in the Alps, striding ever upward, heavily burdened, and with mind bent only on her home; but yet without effort and without thought, knitting for her children. Now stockings are good and comfortable things, and the children will undoubtedly be much the better for them; but surely it would be short-sighted, to say the least of it, to depreciate this toiling mother as a mere stocking-machine—a mere provider of physical comforts?

However, there are blind leaders of the blind, and not a few of them, who take this view of natural knowledge, and can see nothing in the bountiful mother of humanity but a sort of comfort-grinding machine. According to them, the improvement of natural knowledge always has been, and always must be, synonymous with no more than the improvement of the material resources and the increase of the gratifications of men.

Natural knowledge is, in their eyes, no real mother of mankind, bringing them up with kindness, and, if need be, with sternness, in the way they should go, and instructing them in all things needful for their welfare; but a sort of fairy godmother, ready to furnish her pets with shoes of swiftness, swords of sharpness, and omnipotent Aladdin's lamps, so that they may have telegraphs to Saturn, and see the other side of the moon, and thank God they are better than their benighted ancestors.

If this talk were true, I, for one, should not greatly care to toil in the service of natural knowledge. I think I would just as soon be quietly chipping my own flint axe, after the manner of my forefathers a few thousand years back, as be troubled with the endless malady of thought which now infests us all, for such reward. But I venture to say that such views are contrary alike to reason and to fact. Those who discourse in such fashion seem to me to be so intent upon trying to see what is above Nature, or what is behind her, that they are blind to what stares them in the face in her.

I should not venture to speak thus strongly if my justification were not to be found in the simplest and most obvious facts,—if it needed more than an appeal to the most notorious truths to justify my assertion, that the improvement of natural knowledge, whatever direction it has taken, and however low the aims of those who may have commenced it—has not only conferred practical benefits on men, but, in so doing, has effected a revolution in their conceptions of the universe and of themselves, and has profoundly altered their modes of thinking and their views of right and wrong. I say that natural knowledge, seeking to satisfy natural wants, has found the ideas which can alone still spiritual cravings. I say that natural knowledge, in desiring to ascertain the laws of comfort, has been driven to discover those of conduct, and to lay the foundations of a new morality.

Let us take these points separately; and first, what great ideas has natural knowledge introduced into men's minds?

I cannot but think that the foundations of all natural knowledge were laid when the reason of man first came face to face with the facts of Nature; when the savage first

learned that the fingers of one hand are fewer than those of both; that it is shorter to cross a stream than to head it; that a stone stops where it is unless it be moved, and that it drops from the hand which lets it go; that light and heat come and go with the sun; that sticks burn away in a fire; that plants and animals grow and die; that if he struck his fellow savage a blow he would make him angry, and perhaps get a blow in return, while if he offered him a fruit he would please him, and perhaps receive a fish in exchange. When men had acquired this much knowledge, the outlines, rude though they were, of mathematics, of physics, of chemistry, of biology, of moral, economical, and political science, were sketched. Nor did the germ of religion fail when science began to bud. Listen to words which, though new, are yet three thousand years old:—

. . . When in heaven the stars about the moon
Look beautiful, when all the winds are laid,
And every height comes out, and jutting peak
And valley, and the immeasurable heavens
Break open to their highest, and all the stars
Shine, and the shepherd gladdens in his heart.¹

If the half savage Greek could share our feelings thus far, it is irrational to doubt that he went further, to find as we do, that upon that brief gladness there follows a certain sorrow,—the little light of awakened human intelligence shines so mere a spark amidst the abyss of the unknown and unknowable; seems so insufficient to do more than illuminate the imperfections that cannot be remedied, the aspirations that cannot be realized, of man's own nature. But in this sadness, this consciousness of the limitation of man, this sense of an open secret which he cannot penetrate, lies the essence of all religion; and the attempt to embody it in the forms furnished by the intellect is the origin of the higher theologies.

Thus it seems impossible to imagine but that the foundations of all knowledge—secular or sacred—were laid when intelligence dawned, though the superstructure remained for long ages so slight and feeble as

¹Need it be said that this is Tennyson's English for Homer's Greek? (Huxley's note. The passage is from Tennyson's *Saunders of a Translation of the Iliad in Blank Verse*, and is a translation of B. xxviii. 20 at Bk. VIII of the *Iliad*.)

to be compatible with the existence of almost any general view respecting the mode of governance of the universe. No doubt, from the first, there were certain phenomena which, to the rudest mind, presented a constancy of occurrence, and suggested that a fixed order ruled, at any rate, among them. I doubt if the grossest of fetish worshippers ever imagined that a stone must have a god within it to make it fall, or that a fruit had a god within it to make it taste sweet. With regard to such matters as these, it is hardly questionable that mankind from the first took strictly positive and scientific views.¹

But, with respect to all the less familiar occurrences which present themselves, uncultured man, no doubt, has always taken himself as the standard of comparison, as the center and measure of the world; nor could he well avoid doing so. And finding that his apparently uncaused will has a powerful effect in giving rise to many occurrences, he naturally enough ascribed other and greater events to other and greater volitions, and came to look upon the world and all that therein is, as the product of the volitions of persons like himself, but stronger, and capable of being appeased or angered, as he himself might be soothed or irritated. Through such conceptions of the plan and working of the universe all mankind have passed, or are passing. And we may now consider what has been the effect of the improvement of natural knowledge on the views of men who have reached this stage, and who have begun to cultivate natural knowledge with no desire but that of "increasing God's honor and bettering man's estate."²

For example, what could seem wiser, from a mere material point of view, more innocent, from a theological one, to an ancient people, than that they should learn the exact succession of the seasons, as warnings for their husbandmen; or the position of the stars, as guides to their rude navigators? But what has grown out of this search for

natural knowledge of so merely useful a character? You all know the reply. Astronomy,—which of all sciences has filled men's minds with general ideas of a character most foreign to their daily experience, and has, more than any other, rendered it impossible for them to accept the beliefs of their fathers. Astronomy,—which tells them that this so vast and seemingly solid earth is but an atom among atoms, whirling, no man knows whither, through illimitable space; which demonstrates that what we call the peaceful heaven above us, is but that space, filled by an infinitely subtle matter whose particles are seething and surging, like the waves of an angry sea; which opens up to us infinite regions where nothing is known, or ever seems to have been known, but matter and force, operating according to rigid rules; which leads us to contemplate phenomena the very nature of which demonstrates that they must have had a beginning, and that they must have an end, but the very nature of which also proves that the beginning was, to our conceptions of time, infinitely remote, and that the end is as immeasurably distant.

But it is not alone those who pursue astronomy who ask for bread and receive ideas. What more harmless than the attempt to lift and distribute water by pumping it; what more absolutely and grossly utilitarian? Yet out of pumps grew the discussions about Nature's abhorrence of a vacuum; and then it was discovered that Nature does not abhor a vacuum, but that air has weight; and that notion paved the way for the doctrine that all matter has weight, and that the force which produces weight is co-extensive with the universe,—in short, to the theory of universal gravitation and endless force. While learning how to handle gases led to the discovery of oxygen, and to modern chemistry, and to the notion of the indestructibility of matter.

Again, what simpler, or more absolutely practical, than the attempt to keep the axle of a wheel from heating when the wheel turns round very fast? How useful for carters and gig drivers to know something about this; and how good were it, if any ingenious person would find out the cause of such phenomena, and thence educe a general remedy for them. Such an ingenious person

¹An allusion to the contention of Auguste Comte (1798-1857) in his Positivist philosophy that the progress of human thought has been through a theological to a metaphysical stage and from the latter to a "positive" stage, wherein it is recognized that reality is adequately summed up in the process of scientific observation and generalization.

²See Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, I, v, 11.

was Count Rumford;¹ and he and his successors have landed us in the theory of the persistence, or indestructibility, of force. And in the infinitely minute, as in the infinitely great, the seekers after natural knowledge of the kinds called physical and chemical, have everywhere found a definite order and succession of events which seem never to be infringed.

And how has it fared with "Physick" and Anatomy? Have the anatomist, the physiologist, or the physician, whose business it has been to devote themselves assiduously to that eminently practical and direct end, the alleviation of the sufferings of mankind,—have they been able to confine their vision more absolutely to the strictly useful? I fear they are the worst offenders of all. For if the astronomer has set before us the infinite magnitude of space, and the practical eternity of the duration of the universe; if the physical and chemical philosophers have demonstrated the infinite minuteness of its constituent parts, and the practical eternity of matter and of force; and if both have alike proclaimed the universality of a definite and predicable order and succession of events, the workers in biology have not only accepted all these, but have added more startling theses of their own. For, as the astronomers discover in the earth no center of the universe, but an eccentric speck, so the naturalists find man to be no center of the living world, but one amidst endless modifications of life; and as the astronomer observes the mark of practically endless time set upon the arrangements of the solar system so the student of life finds the records of ancient forms of existence peopling the world for ages, which, in relation to human experience, are infinite.

Furthermore, the physiologist finds life to be as dependent for its manifestation on particular molecular arrangements as any physical or chemical phenomenon; and wherever he extends his researches, fixed order and unchanging causation reveal themselves, as plainly as in the rest of Nature.

Nor can I find that any other fate has

awaited the germ of religion. Arising, like all other kinds of knowledge, out of the action and interaction of man's mind, with that which is not man's mind, it has taken the intellectual coverings of fetishism or polytheism; of theism or atheism; of superstition or rationalism. With these, and their relative merits and demerits, I have nothing to do; but this it is needful for my purpose to say, that if the religion of the present differs from that of the past, it is because the theology of the present has become more scientific than that of the past; because it has not only renounced idols of wood and idols of stone, but begins to see the necessity of breaking in pieces the idols built up of books and traditions and fine-spun ecclesiastical cobwebs: and of cherishing the noblest and most human of man's emotions, by worship "for the most part of the silent sort" at the altar of the Unknown.²

Such are a few of the new conceptions implanted in our minds by the improvement of natural knowledge. Men have acquired the ideas of the practically infinite extent of the universe and of its practical eternity; they are familiar with the conception that our earth is but an infinitesimal fragment of that part of the universe which can be seen; and that, nevertheless, its duration is, as compared with our standards of time, infinite. They have further acquired the idea that man is but one of innumerable forms of life now existing on the globe, and that the present existences are but the last of an immeasurable series of predecessors. Moreover, every step they have made in natural knowledge has tended to extend and rivet in their minds the conception of a definite order of the universe—which is embodied in what are called, by an unhappy metaphor, the laws of Nature—and to narrow the range and loosen the force of men's belief in spontaneity, or in changes other than such as arise out of that definite order itself.

Whether these ideas are well or ill founded is not the question. No one can deny that they exist, and have been the inevitable outgrowth of the improvement of natural knowledge. And if so, it cannot be doubted that they are changing the form of men's

¹Born in Massachusetts in 1753, he sided with the British during the American Revolution and later lived in Bavaria. He was created a Count of the Holy Roman Empire, and died in 1814.

²See Acts, xvii, 23. The words within quotation-marks are Carlyle's.

most cherished and most important convictions.

And as regards the second point—the extent to which the improvement of natural knowledge has remodeled and altered what may be termed the intellectual ethics of men,—what are among the moral convictions most fondly held by barbarous and semi-barbarous people.

They are the convictions that authority is the soundest basis of belief; that merit attaches to a readiness to believe; that the doubting disposition is a bad one, and scepticism a sin; that when good authority has pronounced what is to be believed, and faith has accepted it, reason has no further duty. There are many excellent persons who yet hold by these principles, and it is not my present business, or intension, to discuss their views. All I wish to bring clearly before your minds is the unquestionable fact, that the improvement of natural knowledge is effected by methods which directly give the lie to all these convictions, and assume the exact reverse of each to be true.

The improver of natural knowledge absolutely refuses to acknowledge authority, as such. For him, scepticism is the highest of duties; blind faith the one unpardonable sin. And it cannot be otherwise, for every great advance in natural knowledge has involved the absolute rejection of authority, the cherishing of the keenest scepticism, the annihilation of the spirit of blind faith; and the most ardent votary of science holds his firmest convictions, not because the men he most venerates hold them; not because their verity is testified by portents and wonders; but because his experience teaches him that whenever he chooses to bring these convictions into contact with their primary source, Nature—whenever he thinks fit to test them by appealing to experiment and to observation—Nature will confirm them. The man of science has learned to believe in justification, not by faith, but by verification.

Thus, without for a moment pretending to despise the practical results of the improvement of natural knowledge, and its beneficial influence on material civilization, it must, I think, be admitted that the great ideas, some of which I have indicated, and the ethical spirit which I have endeavored to sketch, in the few moments which remained

at my disposal, constitute the real and permanent significance of natural knowledge.

If these ideas be destined, as I believe they are, to be more and more firmly established as the world grows older; if that spirit be fated, as I believe it is, to extend itself into all departments of human thought, and to become co-extensive with the range of knowledge; if, as our race approaches its maturity, it discovers, as I believe it will, that there is but one kind of knowledge and but one method of acquiring it; then we, who are still children, may justly feel it our highest duty to recognize the advisableness of improving natural knowledge, and so to aid ourselves and our successors in our course towards the noble goal which lies before mankind.

A LIBERAL EDUCATION; AND WHERE TO FIND IT¹

THE business which the South London Working Men's College has undertaken is a great work; indeed, I might say, that Education, with which that college proposes to grapple, is the greatest work of all those which lie ready to a man's hand just at present.

And, at length, this fact is becoming generally recognized. You cannot go anywhere without hearing a buzz of more or less confused and contradictory talk on this subject—nor can you fail to notice that, in one point at any rate, there is a very decided advance upon like discussions in former days. Nobody outside the agricultural interest now dares to say that education is a bad thing. If any representative of the once large and powerful party, which, in former days, proclaimed this opinion, still exists in the semi-fossil state, he keeps his thoughts to himself. In fact, there is a chorus of voices, almost distressing in their harmony, raised in favor of the doctrine that education is the great panacea for human troubles, and that, if the country is not shortly to go to the dogs, everybody must be educated.

The politicians tell us, "You must educate

¹An address delivered at the South London Working Men's College on 4 January, 1868; later published in *Macmillan's Magazine* and reprinted in *Science and Education (Collected Essays, Vol. III)*. The College was founded by F. D. Maurice in 1854.

the masses because they are going to be masters." The clergy join in the cry for education, for they affirm that the people are drifting away from church and chapel into the broadest infidelity. The manufacturers and the capitalists swell the chorus lustily. They declare that ignorance makes bad workmen; that England will soon be unable to turn out cotton goods, or steam engines, cheaper than other people; and then, Ichabod! Ichabod! the glory will be departed from us.¹ And a few voices are lifted up in favor of the doctrine that the masses should be educated because they are men and women with unlimited capacities of being, doing, and suffering, and that it is as true now, as it ever was, that the people perish for lack of knowledge.

These members of the minority, with whom I confess I have a good deal of sympathy, are doubtful whether any of the other reasons urged in favor of the education of the people are of much value—whether, indeed, some of them are based upon either wise or noble grounds of action. They question if it be wise to tell people that you will do for them, out of fear of their power, what you have left undone, so long as your only motive was compassion for their weakness and their sorrows. And, if ignorance of everything which it is needful a ruler should know is likely to do so much harm in the governing classes of the future, why is it, they ask reasonably enough, that such ignorance in the governing classes of the past has not been viewed with equal horror?

Compare the average artisan and the average country squire, and it may be doubted if you will find a pin to choose between the two in point of ignorance, class feeling, or prejudice. It is true that the ignorance is of a different sort—that the class feeling is in favor of a different class—and that the prejudice has a distinct savor of wrong-headedness in each case—but it is questionable if the one is either a bit better, or a bit worse, than the other. The old protectionist theory is the doctrine of trades unions as applied by the squires, and the modern trades unionism is the doctrine of the squires applied by the artisans. Why

should we be worse off under one *régime* than under the other?

Again, this sceptical minority asks the clergy to think whether it is really want of education which keeps the masses away from their ministrations—whether the most completely educated men are not as open to reproach on this score as the workmen; and whether, perchance, this may not indicate that it is not education which lies at the bottom of the matter?

Once more, these people, whom there is no pleasing, venture to doubt whether the glory which rests upon being able to undersell all the rest of the world, is a very safe kind of glory—whether we may not purchase it too dear; especially if we allow education, which ought to be directed to the making men, to be diverted into a process of manufacturing human tools, wonderfully adroit in the exercise of some technical industry, but good for nothing else.

And, finally, these people inquire whether it is the masses alone who need a reformed and improved education. They ask whether the richest of our public schools might not well be made to supply knowledge, as well as gentlemanly habits, a strong class feeling, and eminent proficiency in cricket. They seem to think that the noble foundations of our old universities are hardly fulfilling their functions in their present posture of half-clerical seminaries, half racecourses, where men are trained to win a senior wranglership, or a double-first,² as horses are trained to win a cup, with as little reference to the needs of after-life in the case of a man as in that of the racer. And, while as zealous for education as the rest, they affirm that, if the education of the richer classes were such as to fit them to be the leaders and the governors of the poorer; and, if the education of the poorer classes were such as to enable them to appreciate really wise guidance and good governance, the politicians need not fear mob-law, nor the clergy lament their want of flocks, nor the capitalists prognosticate the annihilation of the prosperity of the country.

Such is the diversity of opinion upon the why and the wherefore of education. And my hearers will be prepared to expect that

¹See 1 Samuel, iv, 21.

²Names indicating high honors in scholarship at Cambridge and Oxford.

the practical recommendations which are put forward are not less discordant. There is a loud cry for compulsory education. We English, in spite of constant experience to the contrary, preserve a touching faith in the efficacy of acts of Parliament; and I believe we should have compulsory education in the course of next session, if there were the least probability that half a dozen leading statesmen of different parties would agree what that education should be.

Some hold that education without theology is worse than none. Others maintain, quite as strongly, that education with theology is in the same predicament. But this is certain, that those who hold the first opinion can by no means agree what theology should be taught; and that those who maintain the second are in a small minority.

At any rate "make people learn to read, write, and cipher," say a great many; and the advice is undoubtedly sensible as far as it goes. But, as has happened to me in former days, those who, in despair of getting anything better, advocate this measure, are met with the objection that it is very like making a child practise the use of a knife, fork, and spoon, without giving it a particle of meat. I really don't know what reply is to be made to such an objection.

But it would be unprofitable to spend more time in disentangling, or rather in showing up the knots in, the raveled skeins of our neighbors. Much more to the purpose is it to ask if we possess any clue of our own which may guide us among these entanglements. And by way of a beginning, let us ask ourselves—What is education? Above all things, what is our ideal of a thoroughly liberal education?—of that education which, if we could begin life again, we would give ourselves—of that education which, if we could mold the fates to our own will, we would give our children? Well, I know not what may be your conceptions upon this matter, but I will tell you mine, and I hope I shall find that our views are not very discrepant.

Suppose it were perfectly certain that the life and fortune of every one of us would, one day or other, depend upon his winning or losing a game of chess. Don't you think that we should all consider it to be a primary duty to learn at least the names and the

moves of the pieces; to have a notion of a gambit, and a keen eye for all the means of giving and getting out of check? Do you not think that we should look with a disapprobation amounting to scorn, upon the father who allowed his son, or the state which allowed its members, to grow up without knowing a pawn from a knight?

Yet it is a very plain and elementary truth that the life, the fortune, and the happiness of every one of us, and, more or less, of those who are connected with us, do depend upon our knowing something of the rules of a game infinitely more difficult and complicated than chess. It is a game which has been played for untold ages, every man and woman of us being one of the two players in a game of his or her own. The chess-board is the world, the pieces are the phenomena of the universe, the rules of the game are what we call the laws of Nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just, and patient. But also we know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance. To the man who plays well, the highest stakes are paid, with that sort of overflowing generosity with which the strong shows delight in strength. And one who plays ill is checkmated—without haste, but without remorse.

My metaphor will remind some of you of the famous picture in which Retzsch¹ has depicted Satan playing at chess with man for his soul. Substitute for the mocking fiend in that picture a calm, strong angel who is playing for love, as we say, and would rather lose than win—and I should accept it as an image of human life.

Well, what I mean by education is learning the rules of this mighty game. In other words, education is the instruction of the intellect in the laws of Nature, under which name I include not merely things and their forces, but men and their ways; and the fashioning of the affections and of the will into an earnest and loving desire to move in harmony with those laws. For me, education means neither more nor less than this. Anything which professes to call itself education must be tried by this standard,

¹Moritz Retzsch (1779–1857), German painter.

and if it fails to stand the test, I will not call it education, whatever may be the force of authority, or of numbers, upon the other side.

It is important to remember that, in strictness, there is no such thing as an uneducated man. Take an extreme case. Suppose that an adult man, in the full vigor of his faculties, could be suddenly placed in the world, as Adam is said to have been, and then left to do as he best might. How long would he be left uneducated? Not five minutes. Nature would begin to teach him, through the eye, the ear, the touch, the properties of objects. Pain and pleasure would be at his elbow telling him to do this and avoid that; and by slow degrees the man would receive an education which, if narrow, would be thorough, real, and adequate to his circumstances, though there would be no extras and very few accomplishments.

And if to this solitary man entered a second Adam, or, better still, an Eve, a new and greater world, that of social and moral phenomena, would be revealed. Joys and woes, compared with which all others might seem but faint shadows, would spring from the new relations. Happiness and sorrow would take the place of the coarser monitors, pleasure and pain; but conduct would still be shaped by the observation of the natural consequences of actions; or, in other words, by the laws of the nature of man.

To every one of us the world was once as fresh and new as to Adam. And then, long before we were susceptible of any other mode of instruction, Nature took us in hand, and every minute of waking life brought its educational influence, shaping our actions into rough accordance with Nature's laws, so that we might not be ended untimely by too gross disobedience. Nor should I speak of this process of education as past for any one, be he as old as he may. For every man the world is as fresh as it was at the first day, and as full of untold novelties for him who has the eyes to see them. And Nature is still continuing her patient education of us in that great university, the universe, of which we are all members—Nature having no Test-Acts.¹

¹The name given to English laws requiring assent to the doctrines of the Church of England before one

Those who take honors in Nature's university, who learn the laws which govern men and things and obey them, are the really great and successful men in this world. The great mass of mankind are the "Poll,"² who pick up just enough to get through without much discredit. Those who won't learn at all are plucked;³ and then you can't come up again. Nature's pluck means extermination.

Thus the question of compulsory education is settled so far as Nature is concerned. Her bill on that question was framed and passed long ago. But, like all compulsory legislation, that of Nature is harsh and wasteful in its operation. Ignorance is visited as sharply as willful disobedience—incapacity meets with the same punishment as crime. Nature's discipline is not even a word and a blow, and the blow first; but the blow without the word. It is left to you to find out why your ears are boxed.

The object of what we commonly call education—that education in which man intervenes and which I shall distinguish as artificial education—is to make good these defects in Nature's methods; to prepare the child to receive Nature's education, neither incapably nor ignorantly, nor with willful disobedience; and to understand the preliminary symptoms of her pleasure, without waiting for the box on the ear. In short, all artificial education ought to be an anticipation of natural education. And a liberal education is an artificial education which has not only prepared a man to escape the great evils of disobedience to natural laws, but has trained him to appreciate and to seize upon the rewards, which Nature scatters with as free a hand as her penalties.

That man, I think, has had a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleasure all the work that, as a mechanism, it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine,

might hold public office or receive a university degree. Such a law concerning university degrees was still in force when Huxley delivered this address, though it was repealed three years later (1871).

²*I.e.*, the students who get degrees without honors. "Poll" is a Cambridge-University slang term, derived from Greek οἱ πολλοί, the many, the rabble.

³Rejected for deficiency.

with all its parts of equal strength, and in smooth working order; ready, like a steam engine, to be turned to any kind of work, and spin the gossamers as well as forge the anchors of the mind; whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the great and fundamental truths of Nature and of the laws of her operations; one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience; who has learned to love all beauty, whether of Nature or of art, to hate all vileness, and to respect others as himself.

Such an one and no other, I conceive, has had a liberal education; for he is, as completely as a man can be, in harmony with Nature. He will make the best of her, and she of him. They will get on together rarely; she as his ever beneficent mother; he as her mouthpiece, her conscious self, her minister and interpreter.

Where is such an education as this to be had? Where is there any approximation to it? Has any one tried to found such an education? Looking over the length and breadth of these islands, I am afraid that all these questions must receive a negative answer.¹

SCIENCE AND CULTURE²

Six years ago, as some of my present hearers may remember, I had the privilege of addressing a large assemblage of the inhabitants of this city, who had gathered together to do honor to the memory of their famous townsman, Joseph Priestley;³ and, if any satisfaction attaches to posthumous glory, we may hope that the *manes*⁴ of the

¹In the remainder of this address, not here printed, Huxley discussed English education as it was in the eighteen-sixties, with the aim of showing how far from "liberal" it was.

²An address delivered at the opening of Sir Josiah Mason's Science College at Birmingham on 1 October, 1880; later published in *Science and Education* (*Collected Essays*, Vol. III).

³Scientist, theologian, and political theorist (1733-1804). Because of his sympathy with the French Revolution, Priestley was attacked by a mob in 1791, his house was broken into and burned, and his instruments and manuscripts destroyed.

⁴Ancestral spirits.

burnt-out philosopher were then finally appeased.

No man, however, who is endowed with a fair share of common sense, and not more than a fair share of vanity, will identify either contemporary or posthumous fame with the highest good; and Priestley's life leaves no doubt that he, at any rate, set a much higher value upon the advancement of knowledge, and the promotion of that freedom of thought which is at once the cause and the consequence of intellectual progress.

Hence I am disposed to think that, if Priestley could be amongst us to-day, the occasion of our meeting would afford him even greater pleasure than the proceedings which celebrated the centenary of his chief discovery.⁵ The kindly heart would be moved, the high sense of social duty would be satisfied, by the spectacle of well-earned wealth neither squandered in tawdry luxury and vainglorious show, nor scattered with the careless charity which blesses neither him that gives nor him that takes, but expended in the execution of a well-considered plan for the aid of present and future generations of those who are willing to help themselves.

We shall all be of one mind thus far. But it is needful to share Priestley's keen interest in physical science; and to have learned, as he had learned, the value of scientific training in fields of inquiry apparently far remote from physical science; in order to appreciate, as he would have appreciated, the value of the noble gift which Sir Josiah Mason has bestowed upon the inhabitants of the Midland district.

For us children of the nineteenth century, however, the establishment of a college under the conditions of Sir Josiah Mason's Trust, has a significance apart from any which it could have possessed a hundred years ago. It appears to be an indication that we are reaching the crisis of the battle, or rather of the long series of battles, which have been fought over education in a campaign which began long before Priestley's time, and will probably not be finished just yet.

In the last century, the combatants were

⁵Priestley was the discoverer of oxygen, and announced his discovery in 1774.

the champions of ancient literature on the one side, and those of modern literature on the other; but, some thirty years¹ ago, the contest became complicated by the appearance of a third army, ranged round the banner of physical science.

I am not aware that any one has authority to speak in the name of this new host. For it must be admitted to be somewhat of a guerilla force, composed largely of irregulars, each of whom fights pretty much for his own hand. But the impressions of a full private, who has seen a good deal of service in the ranks, respecting the present position of affairs and the conditions of a permanent peace, may not be devoid of interest; and I do not know that I could make a better use of the present opportunity than by laying them before you.

From the time that the first suggestion to introduce physical science into ordinary education was timidly whispered, until now, the advocates of scientific education have met with opposition of two kinds. On the one hand, they have been pooh-poohed by the men of business who pride themselves on being the representatives of practicality; while, on the other hand, they have been excommunicated by the classical scholars, in their capacity of Levites in charge of the ark of culture² and monopolists of liberal education.

The practical men believed that the idol whom they worship—rule of thumb—has been the source of the past prosperity, and will suffice for the future welfare of the arts and manufactures. They were of opinion that science is speculative rubbish; that theory and practice have nothing to do with one another; and that the scientific habit of mind is an impediment, rather than an aid, in the conduct of ordinary affairs.

I have used the past tense in speaking of the practical men—for although they were very formidable thirty years ago, I am not sure that the pure species has not been extirpated. In fact, so far as mere argument goes, they have been subjected to such a

*feu d'enfer*³ that it is a miracle if any have escaped. But I have remarked that your typical practical man has an unexpected resemblance to one of Milton's angels. His spiritual wounds, such as are inflicted by logical weapons, may be as deep as a well and as wide as a church door, but beyond shedding a few drops of ichor, celestial or otherwise, he is no whit the worse.⁴ So, if any of these opponents be left, I will not waste time in vain repetition of the demonstrative evidence of the practical value of science; but knowing that a parable will sometimes penetrate where syllogisms fail to effect an entrance, I will offer a story for their consideration.

Once upon a time, a boy,⁵ with nothing to depend upon but his own vigorous nature, was thrown into the thick of the struggle for existence in the midst of a great manufacturing population. He seems to have had a hard fight, inasmuch as, by the time he was thirty years of age, his total disposable funds amounted to twenty pounds. Nevertheless, middle life found him giving proof of his comprehension of the practical problems he had been roughly called upon to solve, by a career of remarkable prosperity.

Finally, having reached old age with its well-earned surroundings of "honor, troops of friends,"⁶ the hero of my story bethought himself of those who were making a like start in life, and how he could stretch out a helping hand to them.

After long and anxious reflection this successful practical man of business could devise nothing better than to provide them with the means of obtaining "sound, extensive, and practical scientific knowledge."⁷ And he devoted a large part of his wealth and five years of incessant work to this end.

I need not point the moral of a tale which, as the solid and spacious fabric of the Scientific College assures us, is no fable, nor can anything which I could say intensify the force of this practical answer to practical objections.

¹Furious fire.

²See *Paradise Lost*, VI, 327 and following lines.

³Sir Josiah Mason (1795-1881).

⁴*Macbeth*, V, iii, 25.

⁵Quoted from Mason.

¹The advocacy of the introduction of physical science into general education by George Combe and others commenced a good deal earlier; but the movement had acquired hardly any practical force before the time to which I refer (Huxley's note).

²See Numbers, iii, 14-32.

We may take it for granted then, that, in the opinion of those best qualified to judge, the diffusion of thorough scientific education is an absolutely essential condition of industrial progress; and that the college which has been opened to-day will confer an inestimable boon upon those whose livelihood is to be gained by the practice of the arts and manufactures of the district.

The only question worth discussion is, whether the conditions, under which the work of the college is to be carried out, are such as to give it the best possible chance of achieving permanent success.

Sir Josiah Mason, without doubt most wisely, has left very large freedom of action to the trustees, to whom he proposes ultimately to commit the administration of the college, so that they may be able to adjust its arrangements in accordance with the changing conditions of the future. But, with respect to three points, he has laid most explicit injunctions upon both administrators and teachers.

Party politics are forbidden to enter into the minds of either, so far as the work of the college is concerned; theology is as sternly banished from its precincts; and finally, it is especially declared that the college shall make no provision for "mere literary instruction and education."

It does not concern me at present to dwell upon the first two injunctions any longer than may be needful to express my full conviction of their wisdom. But the third prohibition brings us face to face with those other opponents of scientific education, who are by no means in the moribund condition of the practical man, but alive, alert, and formidable.

It is not impossible that we shall hear this express exclusion of "literary instruction and education" from a college which, nevertheless, professes to give a high and efficient education, sharply criticized. Certainly the time was that the Levites of culture would have sounded their trumpets against its walls as against an educational Jericho.¹

How often have we not been told that the study of physical science is incompetent to confer culture; that it touches none of the higher problems of life; and, what is worse,

that the continual devotion to scientific studies tends to generate a narrow and bigoted belief in the applicability of scientific methods to the search after truth of all kinds? How frequently one has reason to observe that no reply to a troublesome argument tells so well as calling its author a "mere scientific specialist." And, as I am afraid it is not permissible to speak of this form of opposition to scientific education in the past tense, may we not expect to be told that this, not only omission, but prohibition, of "mere literary instruction and education" is a patent example of scientific narrow-mindedness?

I am not acquainted with Sir Josiah Mason's reasons for the action which he has taken; but if, as I apprehend is the case, he refers to the ordinary classical course of our schools and universities by the name of "mere literary instruction and education," I venture to offer sundry reasons of my own in support of that action.

For I hold very strongly by two convictions—The first is, that neither the discipline nor the subject-matter of classical education is of such direct value to the student of physical science as to justify the expenditure of valuable time upon either; and the second is, that for the purpose of attaining real culture, an exclusively scientific education is at least as effectual as an exclusively literary education.

I need hardly point out to you that these opinions, especially the latter, are diametrically opposed to those of the great majority of educated Englishmen, influenced as they are by school and university traditions. In their belief, culture is obtainable only by a liberal education; and a liberal education is synonymous, not merely with education and instruction in literature, but in one particular form of literature, namely, that of Greek and Roman antiquity. They hold that the man who has learned Latin and Greek, however little, is educated; while he who is versed in other branches of knowledge, however deeply, is a more or less respectable specialist, not admissible into the cultured caste. The stamp of the educated man, the university degree, is not for him.

I am too well acquainted with the generous catholicity of spirit, the true sympathy with scientific thought, which pervades the

¹See Joshua, vi.

writings of our chief apostle of culture¹ to identify him with these opinions; and yet one may cull from one and another of those epistles to the Philistines, which so much delight all who do not answer to that name, sentences which lend them some support.

Mr. Arnold tells us that the meaning of culture is "to know the best that has been thought and said in the world."² It is the criticism of life contained in literature. That criticism regards "Europe as being, for intellectual and spiritual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result; and whose members have, for their common outfit, a knowledge of Greek, Roman, and Eastern antiquity, and of one another. Special, local, and temporary advantages being put out of account, that modern nation will in the intellectual and spiritual sphere make most progress, which most thoroughly carries out this program. And what is that but saying that we too, all of us, as individuals, the more thoroughly we carry it out, shall make the more progress?"³

We have here to deal with two distinct propositions. The first, that a criticism of life is the essence of culture; the second, that literature contains the materials which suffice for the construction of such criticism.

I think that we must all assent to the first proposition. For culture certainly means something quite different from learning or technical skill. It implies the possession of an ideal, and the habit of critically estimating the value of things by comparison with a theoretic standard. Perfect culture should supply a complete theory of life, based upon a clear knowledge alike of its possibilities and of its limitations.

But we may agree to all this, and yet strongly dissent from the assumption that literature alone is competent to supply this knowledge. After having learned all that

Greek, Roman, and Eastern antiquity have thought and said, and all that modern literatures have to tell us, it is not self-evident that we have laid a sufficiently broad and deep foundation for that criticism of life which constitutes culture.

Indeed, to any one acquainted with the scope of physical science, it is not at all evident. Considering progress only in the "intellectual and spiritual sphere," I find myself wholly unable to admit that either nations or individuals will really advance, if their common outfit draws nothing from the stores of physical science. I should say that an army, without weapons of precision and with no particular base of operations, might more hopefully enter upon a campaign on the Rhine, than a man, devoid of a knowledge of what physical science has done in the last century, upon a criticism of life.

When a biologist meets with an anomaly, he instinctively turns to the study of development to clear it up. The rationale of contradictory opinions may with equal confidence be sought in history.

It is, happily, no new thing that Englishmen should employ their wealth in building and endowing institutions for educational purposes. But, five or six hundred years ago, deeds of foundation expressed or implied conditions as nearly as possible contrary to those which have been thought expedient by Sir Josiah Mason. That is to say, physical science was practically ignored, while a certain literary training was enjoined as a means to the acquirement of knowledge which was essentially theological.

The reason of this singular contradiction between the actions of men alike animated by a strong and disinterested desire to promote the welfare of their fellows, is easily discovered.

At that time, in fact, if any one desired knowledge beyond such as could be obtained by his own observation, or by common conversation, his first necessity was to learn the Latin language, inasmuch as all the higher knowledge of the western world was contained in works written in that language. Hence, Latin grammar, with logic and rhetoric, studied through Latin, were the fundamentals of education. With respect to the substance of the knowledge imparted

¹Matthew Arnold. Philistine is the word Arnold used to designate the English middle class—children of darkness, as he thought, either opposed to true enlightenment or seeking it in wrong ways.

²This, repeated many times by Arnold, is to be found with slight variations in a number of his books or essays. For the development of his definition of culture see *Culture and Anarchy*.

³*Essays in Criticism* (Huxley's note; the passage quoted is from the essay entitled *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time*, printed below).

through this channel, the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, as interpreted and supplemented by the Romish Church, were held to contain a complete and infallibly true body of information.

Theological dicta were, to the thinkers of those days, that which the axioms and definitions of Euclid are to the geometers of these. The business of the philosophers of the middle ages was to deduce from the data furnished by the theologians, conclusions in accordance with ecclesiastical decrees. They were allowed the high privilege of showing, by logical process, how and why that which the Church said was true, must be true. And if their demonstrations fell short of or exceeded this limit, the Church was maternally ready to check their aberrations; if need were by the help of the secular arm.

Between the two, our ancestors were furnished with a compact and complete criticism of life. They were told how the world began and how it would end; they learned that all material existence was but a base and insignificant blot upon the fair face of the spiritual world, and that nature was, to all intents and purposes, the playground of the devil; they learned that the earth is the center of the visible universe, and that man is the cynosure of things terrestrial; and more especially was it inculcated that the course of nature had no fixed order, but that it could be, and constantly was, altered by the agency of innumerable spiritual beings, good and bad, according as they were moved by the deeds and prayers of men. The sum and substance of the whole doctrine was to produce the conviction that the only thing really worth knowing in this world was how to secure that place in a better which, under certain conditions, the Church promised.

Our ancestors had a living belief in this theory of life, and acted upon it in their dealings with education, as in all other matters. Culture meant saintliness—after the fashion of the saints of those days; the education that led to it was, of necessity, theological; and the way to theology lay through Latin.

That the study of nature—further than was requisite for the satisfaction of everyday wants—should have any bearing on human life was far from the thoughts of men thus

trained. Indeed, as nature had been cursed for man's sake, it was an obvious conclusion that those who meddled with nature were likely to come into pretty close contact with Satan. And, if any born scientific investigator followed his instincts, he might safely reckon upon earning the reputation, and probably upon suffering the fate, of a sorcerer.

Had the western world been left to itself in Chinese isolation, there is no saying how long this state of things might have endured. But, happily, it was not left to itself. Even earlier than the thirteenth century, the development of Moorish civilization in Spain and the great movement of the Crusades had introduced the leaven which, from that day to this, has never ceased to work. At first, through the intermediation of Arabic translations, afterwards by the study of the originals, the western nations of Europe became acquainted with the writings of the ancient philosophers and poets, and, in time, with the whole of the vast literature of antiquity.

Whatever there was of high intellectual aspiration or dominant capacity in Italy, France, Germany, and England, spent itself for centuries in taking possession of the rich inheritance left by the dead civilizations of Greece and Rome. Marvelously aided by the invention of printing, classical learning spread and flourished. Those who possessed it prided themselves on having attained the highest culture then within the reach of mankind.

And justly. For, saving Dante on his solitary pinnacle, there was no figure in modern literature at the time of the Renaissance to compare with the men of antiquity; there was no art to compete with their sculpture; there was no physical science but that which Greece had created. Above all, there was no other example of perfect intellectual freedom—of the unhesitating acceptance of reason as the sole guide to truth and the supreme arbiter of conduct.

The new learning necessarily soon exerted a profound influence upon education. The language of the monks and schoolmen¹ seemed little better than gibberish to scholars fresh from Virgil and Cicero, and the

¹Scholastic philosophers of the Middle Age.

study of Latin was placed upon a new foundation. Moreover, Latin itself ceased to afford the sole key to knowledge. The student who sought the highest thought of antiquity, found only a second-hand reflection of it in Roman literature, and turned his face to the full light of the Greeks. And after a battle, not altogether dissimilar to that which is at present being fought over the teaching of physical science, the study of Greek was recognized as an essential element of all higher education.

Thus the Humanists, as they were called, won the day; and the great reform which they effected was of incalculable service to mankind. But the Nemesis of all reformers is finality; and the reformers of education, like those of religion, fell into the profound, however common, error of mistaking the beginning for the end of the work of reformation.

The representatives of the Humanists, in the nineteenth century, take their stand upon classical education as the sole avenue to culture, as firmly as if we were still in the age of Renaissance. Yet, surely, the present intellectual relations of the modern and the ancient worlds are profoundly different from those which obtained three centuries ago. Leaving aside the existence of a great and characteristically modern literature, of modern painting, and, especially, of modern music, there is one feature of the present state of the civilized world which separates it more widely from the Renaissance than the Renaissance was separated from the middle ages.

This distinctive character of our own times lies in the vast and constantly increasing part which is played by natural knowledge. Not only is our daily life shaped by it, not only does the prosperity of millions of men depend upon it, but our whole theory of life has long been influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by the general conceptions of the universe which have been forced upon us by physical science.

In fact, the most elementary acquaintance with the results of scientific investigation shows us that they offer a broad and striking contradiction to the opinion so implicitly credited and taught in the middle ages.

The notions of the beginning and the end of the world entertained by our forefathers

are no longer credible. It is very certain that the earth is not the chief body in the material universe, and that the world is not subordinated to man's use. It is even more certain that nature is the expression of a definite order with which nothing interferes, and that the chief business of mankind is to learn that order and govern themselves accordingly. Moreover this scientific "criticism of life" presents itself to us with different credentials from any other. It appeals not to authority, nor to what anybody may have thought or said, but to nature. It admits that all our interpretations of natural fact are more or less imperfect and symbolic, and bids the learner seek for truth not among words but among things. It warns us that the assertion which outstrips evidence is not only a blunder but a crime.

The purely classical education advocated by the representatives of the Humanists in our day, gives no inkling of all this. A man may be a better scholar than Erasmus,¹ and know no more of the chief causes of the present intellectual fermentation than Erasmus did. Scholarly and pious persons, worthy of all respect, favor us with allocutions upon the sadness of the antagonism of science to their medieval way of thinking, which betray an ignorance of the first principles of scientific investigation, an incapacity for understanding what a man of science means by veracity, and an unconsciousness of the weight of established scientific truths, which is almost comical.

There is no great force in the *tu quoque*² argument, or else the advocates of scientific education might fairly enough retort upon the modern Humanists that they may be learned specialists, but that they possess no such sound foundation for a criticism of life as deserves the name of culture. And, indeed, if we were disposed to be cruel, we might urge that the Humanists have brought this reproach upon themselves, not because they are too full of the spirit of the ancient Greek, but because they lack it.

The period of the Renaissance is com-

¹One of the most famous of the humanists, or classical scholars, of the Renaissance. He was born at Rotterdam probably in 1465, and died at Basel, Switzerland, in 1536.

²You also.

monly called that of the "Revival of Letters," as if the influences then brought to bear upon the mind of Western Europe had been wholly exhausted in the field of literature. I think it is very commonly forgotten that the revival of science, effected by the same agency, although less conspicuous, was not less momentous.

In fact, the few and scattered students of nature of that day picked up the clue to her secrets exactly as it fell from the hands of the Greeks a thousand years before. The foundations of mathematics were so well laid by them, that our children learn their geometry from a book written for the schools of Alexandria two thousand years ago.¹ Modern astronomy is the natural continuation and development of the work of Hipparchus and of Ptolemy; modern physics of that of Democritus and of Archimedes; it was long before modern biological science outgrew the knowledge bequeathed to us by Aristotle, by Theophrastus, and by Galen.

We cannot know all the best thoughts and sayings of the Greeks unless we know what they thought about natural phenomena. We cannot fully apprehend their criticism of life unless we understand the extent to which that criticism was affected by scientific conceptions. We falsely pretend to be the inheritors of their culture, unless we are penetrated, as the best minds among them were, with an unhesitating faith that the free employment of reason, in accordance with scientific method, is the sole method of reaching truth.

Thus I venture to think that the pretensions of our modern Humanists to the possession of the monopoly of culture and to the exclusive inheritance of the spirit of antiquity must be abated, if not abandoned. But I should be very sorry that anything I have said should be taken to imply a desire on my part to depreciate the value of classical education, as it might be and as it sometimes is. The native capacities of mankind vary no less than their opportunities; and while culture is one, the road by which one man may best reach it is widely different from that which is most advantageous to another. Again, while scientific education is yet inchoate and tentative, classical

education is thoroughly well organized upon the practical experience of generations of teachers. So that, given ample time for learning and estimation for ordinary life, or for a literary career, I do not think that a young Englishman in search of culture can do better than follow the course usually marked out for him, supplementing its deficiencies by his own efforts.

But for those who mean to make science their serious occupation; or who intend to follow the profession of medicine; or who have to enter early upon the business of life; for all these, in my opinion, classical education is a mistake; and it is for this reason that I am glad to see "mere literary education and instruction" shut out from the curriculum of Sir Josiah Mason's College, seeing that its inclusion would probably lead to the introduction of the ordinary smattering of Latin and Greek.

Nevertheless, I am the last person to question the importance of genuine literary education, or to suppose that intellectual culture can be complete without it. An exclusively scientific training will bring about a mental twist as surely as an exclusively literary training. The value of the cargo does not compensate for a ship's being out of trim; and I should be very sorry to think that the Scientific College would turn out none but lop-sided men.

There is no need, however, that such a catastrophe should happen. Instruction in English, French, and German is provided, and thus the three greatest literatures of the modern world are made accessible to the student.

French and German, and especially the latter language, are absolutely indispensable to those who desire full knowledge in any department of science. But even supposing that the knowledge of these languages acquired is not more than sufficient for purely scientific purposes, every Englishman has, in his native tongue, an almost perfect instrument of literary expression; and, in his own literature, models of every kind of literary excellence. If an Englishman cannot get literary culture out of his Bible, his Shakespeare, his Milton, neither, in my belief, will the profoundest study of Homer and Sophocles, Virgil and Horace, give it to him.

Thus, since the constitution of the college

¹ *i.e.*, from Euclid's *Elements*.

makes sufficient provision for literary as well as for scientific education, and since artistic instruction is also contemplated, it seems to me that a fairly complete culture is offered to all who are willing to take advantage of it.

But I am not sure that at this point the "practical" man, scotched but not slain, may ask what all this talk about culture has to do with an institution, the object of which is defined to be "to promote the prosperity of the manufactures and the industry of the country." He may suggest that what is wanted for this end is not culture, nor even a purely scientific discipline, but simply a knowledge of applied science.

I often wish that this phrase, "applied science," had never been invented. For it suggests that there is a sort of scientific knowledge of direct practical use, which can be studied apart from another sort of scientific knowledge, which is of no practical utility, and which is termed "pure science." But there is no more complete fallacy than this. What people call applied science is nothing but the application of pure science to particular classes of problems. It consists of deductions from those general principles, established by reasoning and observation, which constitute pure science. No one can safely make these deductions until he has a firm grasp of the principles; and he can obtain that grasp only by personal experience of the operations of observation and of reasoning on which they are founded.

Almost all the processes employed in the arts and manufactures fall within the range either of physics or of chemistry. In order to improve them, one must thoroughly understand them; and no one has a chance of really understanding them, unless he has obtained that mastery of principles and that habit of dealing with facts, which is given by long-continued and well-directed purely scientific training in the physical and the chemical laboratory. So that there really is no question as to the necessity of purely scientific discipline, even if the work of the college were limited by the narrowest interpretation of its stated aims.

And, as to the desirableness of a wider culture than that yielded by science alone, it is to be recollected that the improvement of manufacturing processes is only one of the

conditions which contribute to the prosperity of industry. Industry is a means and not an end; and mankind work only to get something which they want. What that something is depends partly on their innate, and partly on their acquired, desires.

If the wealth resulting from prosperous industry is to be spent upon the gratification of unworthy desires, if the increasing perfection of manufacturing processes is to be accompanied by an increasing debasement of those who carry them on, I do not see the good of industry and prosperity.

Now it is perfectly true that men's views of what is desirable depend upon their characters; and that the innate proclivities to which we give that name are not touched by any amount of instruction. But it does not follow that even mere intellectual education may not, to an indefinite extent, modify the practical manifestation of the characters of men in their actions, by supplying them with motives unknown to the ignorant. A pleasure-loving character will have pleasure of some sort; but, if you give him the choice, he may prefer pleasures which do not degrade him to those which do. And this choice is offered to every man, who possesses in literary or artistic culture a never-failing source of pleasures, which are neither withered by age, nor staled by custom, nor embittered in the recollection by the pangs of self-reproach.

If the institution opened to-day fulfills the intention of its founder, the picked intelligences among all classes of the population of this district will pass through it. No child born in Birmingham, henceforward, if he have the capacity to profit by the opportunities offered to him, first in the primary and other schools, and afterwards in the Scientific College, need fail to obtain, not merely the instruction, but the culture most appropriate to the conditions of his life.

Within these walls, the future employer and the future artisan may sojourn together for a while, and carry, through all their lives, the stamp of the influences then brought to bear upon them. Hence, it is not beside the mark to remind you, that the prosperity of industry depends not merely upon the improvement of manufacturing processes, not merely upon the ennobling of the indi-

vidual character, but upon a third condition, namely, a clear understanding of the conditions of social life, on the part of both the capitalist and the operative, and their agreement upon common principles of social action. They must learn that social phenomena are as much the expression of natural laws as any others; that no social arrangements can be permanent unless they harmonize with the requirements of social statics and dynamics; and that, in the nature of things, there is an arbiter whose decisions execute themselves.

But this knowledge is only to be obtained by the application of the methods of investigation adopted in physical researches to the investigation of the phenomena of society. Hence, I confess, I should like to see one addition made to the excellent scheme of education propounded for the college, in the shape of provision for the teaching of sociology. For though we are all agreed that party politics are to have no place in the instruction of the college; yet in this country, practically governed as it is now by universal suffrage, every man who does

his duty must exercise political functions. And, if the evils which are inseparable from the good of political liberty are to be checked, if the perpetual oscillation of nations between anarchy and despotism is to be replaced by the steady march of self-restraining freedom; it will be because men will gradually bring themselves to deal with political, as they now deal with scientific questions; to be as ashamed of undue haste and partisan prejudice in the one case as in the other; and to believe that the machinery of society is at least as delicate as that of a spinning-jenny, and as little likely to be improved by the meddling of those who have not taken the trouble to master the principles of its action.

In conclusion, I am sure that I make myself the mouthpiece of all present in offering to the venerable founder of the institution, which now commences its beneficent career, our congratulations on the completion of his work; and in expressing the conviction, that the remotest posterity will point to it as a crucial instance of the wisdom which natural piety leads all men to ascribe to their ancestors.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809-1892)

Tennyson's father was a clergyman, and his mother the daughter of a clergyman. To them were born twelve children, one of whom died in infancy. Their fourth child was Alfred, who was born at Somersby, in Lincolnshire, on 6 August, 1809. Somersby was at that time a village of less than a hundred inhabitants, and the children of the Rev. George Tennyson had a country upbringing. The rectory and the garden at Somersby, the surrounding fen country, and the Lincolnshire farmers—all these made a deep impression upon Alfred and remained abiding influences upon which later experiences were, so to say, grafted. When he was eight years old Alfred was sent to the grammar school at Louth, about ten miles north of Somersby. There he spent more than three years, miserable years which he hated at the time and hated afterwards in memory so deeply that he would never revisit the school. It is said that he was bullied both by a brutal schoolmaster and by his school-fellows. At the end of this period he went back to Somersby and completed his preparation for the University under his father's guidance. At the same time he was writing poetry, had indeed been writing more or less poetry from early childhood. "The first poetry that moved me," he later said, "was my own at five years old." To this influence others succeeded, that of Scott, and then Byron's. When Byron died in 1824, Tennyson later said, "I thought everything was over and finished for every one—that nothing else mattered. I remember I walked out alone and carved 'Byron is dead' into the sandstone." And in 1827 Tennyson published with his brother Charles his first volume, *Poems by Two Brothers*. Early in the following year the two brothers went up to Cambridge, where they entered Trinity College. Tennyson probably never felt quite at home in Cambridge, yet the friendships he made there had a deep influence upon him. He became a member of a group known as "The Apostles," a band "of Platonico-Wordsworthian-Coleridgean-anti-utilitarians," as one of their number afterwards called them, and these morally earnest, theologically liberal young men did much to convince Tennyson that as a poet it was his office not merely to give pleasure to his readers but to become the spiritual guide of his age. Moreover, one of the "Apostles" was Arthur Henry Hallam, son of the historian, an apparently brilliant young man, who became Tennyson's closest friend, with results that markedly colored both his life and his poetry. Meanwhile poetry continued to be written. In 1829 Tennyson won the Chancellor's Medal with a blank-verse poem called *Timbuctoo*, and in 1830 he published his second volume, *Poems Chiefly Lyrical*. In 1831 he left Cambridge without being able to secure a degree. In December, 1832 (the volume is dated 1833), he published more verse, under the title *Poems*. This volume and the volume of 1830 contained some of the poems by which Tennyson is still best known, but there were few to perceive that a great poet had made his appearance. Not only so, but, at least partly because of injudicious praise given the *Poems* by Hallam and other young friends, this volume was seized on for destruction by Lockhart, who published a merciless attack on it in the *Quarterly Review*. Tennyson was always extremely sensitive to criticism, and in his later years would never tolerate it even from his closest friends. So severely wounded was he by Lockhart's article that he did not publish another volume for ten years—years spent in study, writing, and the careful revision of those of his earlier poems which he wished to republish.

In September, 1833, Hallam died suddenly in Vienna, causing Tennyson the greatest sorrow of his life. He almost immediately began writing the "Elegies" which gradually grew in number until they were finally published under the title *In Memoriam A. H. H.* in 1850. Eight years before, in 1842, he had published *English Idylls*, which had at once been recognized as an important volume and had given him a secure place in the world of letters. In 1845 he had been granted a pension, and in 1847 he had published *The Princess*. At length in 1850 he felt able to marry Emily Sellwood, to whom he had been engaged for some thirteen years. In the same year he was appointed, in succession to Wordsworth, Poet Laureate. His position as the great poet of the age was now secure, and during the remainder of his long life all, or nearly all, that he wrote contributed to the steady growth of his almost fabulous reputation among his contemporaries. Shortly after his marriage he acquired Farringford, on the Isle of Wight. In 1852 was published the great *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, in 1855 *Maud*, and in 1859 the first group of *Idylls of the King*. More *Idylls* were published in 1869 and in 1872. In 1864 *Enoch Arden* was published. Shortly before 1870 Tennyson built Aldworth, near Haslemere in Surrey, and thenceforth his time was divided between his new home and Farringford. In 1875 he published *Queen Mary*, the first of some half-dozen plays which he wrote. In January, 1884, he was created Baron of Aldworth and Farringford, an honor which he is said to have accepted reluctantly and only "for the

sake of literature," but an honor, too, which not unfairly indicates the exalted position he had attained in the eyes of the whole English-speaking world. He was by this time an old man, but he continued to the last to write and publish poetry which not only maintained but even added to his reputation. He died on 6 October, 1892, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Tennyson was in a peculiar sense the poet of his age. In his pages we read its littleness and its greatness—its religious doubts and insecure faith, its moral primness, its muddled politics, its ugly all-enveloping industrialism, its confidence in human progress and in the worth of individual endeavor, its pride of achievement, its active sense of a great past to be lived up to, and its noble—if perhaps too emotional and thoughtless—patriotism. Yet at the same time Tennyson was curiously different from his age. One who knows only the legendary Tennyson comes with some surprise on Mr. Edmund Gosse's description of him as "a gaunt, black, touzled man, rough in speech, brooding like an old gypsy over his inch of clay pipe stuffed with shag and sucking in port wine with gusto"—a description confirmed by Carlyle's portrait: "A fine, large-featured, dim-eyed, bronze-colored, shaggy-headed man is Alfred: dusty, smoky, free and easy: who swims, outwardly and inwardly, with great composure in an articulate element as of tranquil chaos and tobacco smoke; great now and then when he does emerge; a most restful, brotherly, solid-hearted man." The truth is that Tennyson's was a complex, if not divided, nature. He was a great public and civic figure, the almost official Victorian guide through life's mazes, but he was also a serious, subtle, painstaking craftsman in verse, and he was at bottom a heavy-hearted mystic, anxious to be alone with his moods, and never perhaps so truly himself as in the purely lyric portions of his poetry.

THE POET¹

The poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above;
Dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of
scorn,
The love of love.

He saw through life and death, through good
and ill,
He saw through his own soul.
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,

Before him lay; with echoing feet he threaded
The secretest walks of fame:
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were
headed
And winged with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver
tongue,
And of so fierce a flight,
From Calpe² unto Caucasus they sung,
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
Them earthward till they lit;
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,
The fruitful wit

Cleaving took root, and springing forth anew
Where'er they fell, behold,
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnished all abroad to fling
The wingéd shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the breathing
spring
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with
beams,
Though one did fling the fire;
Heaven flowed upon the soul in many dreams
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the
world
Like one great garden showed,
And through the wreaths of floating dark
upcurled,
Rare sunrise flowed.

And Freedom reared in that august sunrise
Her beautiful bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burning eyes
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes
Sunned by those orient skies;
But round about the circles of the globes
Of her keen eyes

¹Published in 1830. Tennyson frequently revised his poems as they were reprinted in successive editions, but the dates appended to those here printed are in general simply those of first publication.

²Gibraltar.

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame
 Wisdom, a name to shake
 All evil dreams of power—a sacred name.
 And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,
 And as the lightning to the thunder
 Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,
 Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No
 sword
 Of wrath her right arm whirled,
 But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word
 She shook the world.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT¹

PART I

ON EITHER side the river lie
 Long fields of barley and of rye,
 That clothe the wold² and meet the sky;
 And through the field the road runs by
 To many-towered Camelot;³
 And up and down the people go,
 Gazing where the lilies blow
 Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.⁴

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
 Little breezes dusk and shiver
 Through the wave that runs for ever
 By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.
 Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
 Overlook a space of flowers,
 And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veiled,
 Slide the heavy barges trailed
 By slow horses; and unhailed
 The shallop flitteth silken-sailed
 Skimming down to Camelot:

¹Published in 1832. Tennyson's earliest handling of a theme from Arthurian legend. When he later wrote *Lancelot and Elaine* Tennyson adopted a different version of the story he tells here.

²Open country.

³The legendary city where King Arthur held his court, commonly supposed to be in Cornwall.

⁴In Malory (*Morte d'Arthur*, Bk. XVIII) this word is Astolat. An Italian version of the story of Elaine is said to have suggested Tennyson's poem, which would account for the form Shalott.

But who hath seen her wave her hand?
 Or at the casement seen her stand?
 Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
 In among the bearded barley,
 Hear a song that echoes cheerly
 From the river winding clearly,
 Down to towered Camelot;
 And by the moon the reaper weary,
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
 Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
 Lady of Shalott."

PART II

There she weaves by night and day
 A magic web with colors gay.
 She has heard a whisper say,
 A curse is on her if she stay
 To look down to Camelot.
 She knows not what the curse may be,
 And so she weaveth steadily,
 And little other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror clear
 That hangs before her all the year,
 Shadows of the world appear.
 There she sees the highway near
 Winding down to Camelot;
 There the river eddy whirls,
 And there the surly village-churls,
 And the red cloaks of market girls,
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
 An abbot on an ambling pad,
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
 Or long-haired page in crimson clad,
 Goes by to towered Camelot;
 And sometimes through the mirror blue
 The knights come riding two and two:
 She hath no loyal knight and true,
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
 To weave the mirror's magic sights,
 For often through the silent nights
 A funeral, with plumes and lights
 And music, went to Camelot;
 Or when the moon was overhead,
 Came two young lovers lately wed:
 "I am half sick of shadows," said
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
 He rode between the barley-sheaves,
 The sun came dazzling through the leaves
 And flamed upon the brazen greaves
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight for ever kneeled
 To a lady in his shield,
 That sparkled on the yellow field,
 Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,
 Like to some branch of stars we see
 Hung in the golden Galaxy.¹
 The bridle bells rang merrily
 As he rode down to Camelot;
 And from his blazoned baldric slung
 A mighty silver bugle hung,
 And as he rode his armor rung,
 Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
 Thick-jeweled shone the saddle-leather,
 The helmet and the helmet-feather
 Burned like one burning flame together,
 As he rode down to Camelot;
 As often through the purple night,
 Below the starry clusters bright,
 Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
 Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed;
 On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;
 From underneath his helmet flowed
 His coal-black curls as on he rode,
 As he rode down to Camelot.
 From the bank and from the river
 He flashed into the crystal mirror,
 "Tirra lirra," by the river
 Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
 She made three paces through the room,
 She saw the water-lily bloom,
 She saw the helmet and the plume,
 She looked down to Camelot.
 Out flew the web and floated wide;
 The mirror cracked from side to side;
 "The curse is come upon me," cried
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
 The pale yellow woods were waning,
 The broad stream in his banks complaining,
 Heavily the low sky raining
 Over towered Camelot;
 Down she came and found a boat
 Beneath a willow left afloat,
 And round about the prow she wrote
 The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
 Like some bold seer in a trance,
 Seeing all his own mischance—
 With a glassy countenance
 Did she look to Camelot.
 And at the closing of the day
 She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
 The broad stream bore her far away,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
 That loosely flew to left and right—
 The leaves upon her falling light—
 Through the noises of the night
 She floated down to Camelot;
 And as the boat-head wound along
 The willowy hills and fields among,
 They heard her singing her last song,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
 Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
 Till her blood was frozen slowly,
 And her eyes were darkened wholly,
 Turned to towered Camelot.
 For ere she reached upon the tide
 The first house by the water-side,
 Singing in her song she died,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
 By garden-wall and gallery,
 A gleaming shape she floated by,
 Dead-pale between the houses high,
 Silent into Camelot.
 Out upon the wharfs they came,
 Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
 And round the prow they read her name,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
 And in the lighted palace near

¹The Milky Way.

Died the sound of royal cheer;
 And they crossed themselves for fear,
 All the knights at Camelot:
 But Lancelot mused a little space;
 He said, "She has a lovely face;
 God in his mercy lend her grace,
 The Lady of Shalott."

ÆNONE¹

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
 Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.

The swimming vapor slopes athwart the
 glen,

Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to
 pine,

And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
 The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
 Hang rich in flowers, and far below them
 roars

The long brook falling through the cloven
 ravine

In cataract after cataract to the sea.
 Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
 Stands up and takes the morning; but in
 front

The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
 Troas and Ilion's columned citadel,
 The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon

Mournful Ænone, wandering forlorn
 Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.

Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her
 neck

Floated her hair or seemed to float in rest.
 She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
 Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade
 Sloped downward to her seat from the upper
 cliff.

¹Published in 1832. Ænone was the daughter of a river-god, and the wife of Paris, son of King Priam of Troy. Paris was asked to judge which of the three goddesses, Hera, Pallas Athena, and Aphrodite, was the fairest, and each tried to influence his judgment in her own favor by offering him a reward. Aphrodite said she would give him the most beautiful of women for a wife, whereupon Paris immediately judged her the fairest of the goddesses. Under Aphrodite's care he then left Ænone and sailed for Sparta, whence he bore away Helen to Troy, thus bringing about the Trojan war. Ida is the name of a mountain range forming the southern boundary of the territory of Troas, or Ilium. It was in these mountains that Paris was brought up by shepherds, having been abandoned there as a baby after his mother dreamed that he would bring ruin on Troy. Gargarus is the name of one of the highest peaks of Ida.

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 For now the noonday quiet holds the hill;
 The grasshopper is silent in the grass;
 The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
 Rests like a shadow, and the winds are dead.
 The purple flower droops, the golden bee
 Is lily-cradled; I alone awake.
 My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,
 My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
 And I am all weary of my life.

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Hear me, O earth, hear me, O hills, O caves
 That house the cold crowned snake! O
 mountain brooks,
 I am the daughter of a River-God,
 Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
 My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
 Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,
 A cloud that gathered shape;² for it may be
 That, while I speak of it, a little while
 My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 I waited underneath the dawning hills;
 Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,
 And dewy dark aloft the mountain pine.
 Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
 Leading a jet-black goat white-horned,
 white-hooved,
 Came up from reedy Simois³ all alone.

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Far-off the torrent called me from the cleft;
 Far up the solitary morning smote
 The streaks of virgin snow. With down-
 dropped eyes
 I sat alone; white-breasted like a star
 Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin
 Drooped from his shoulder, but his sunny
 hair
 Clustered about his temples like a God's;
 And his cheek brightened as the foam-bow
 brightens
 When the wind blows the foam, and all my
 heart
 Went forth to embrace him coming ere he
 came.

²The walls of Troy were said to have arisen in obedience to Apollo's music.

³A stream which rises on Mount Ida.

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white
palm

Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,¹
That smelt ambrosially, and while I looked
And listened, the full-flowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart:

"My own Ænone,
Beautiful-browed Ænone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind in-
graven

"For the most fair," would seem to award it
thine,
As lovelier than whatever Oread² haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement, and the charm of married
brows.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He pressed the blossom of his lips to mine,
And added, 'This was cast upon the board,
When all the full-faced presence of the
Gods

Ranged in the hails of Peleus; whereup-
on

Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere
due;

But light-foot Iris³ brought it yester-eve,
Delivering, that to me, by common voice
Elected umpire, Herē comes to-day,
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
It was the deep midnight; one silvery cloud
Had lost his way between the piny sides
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they
came,

Naked they came to that smooth-swarded
bower,

And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,⁴
Lotos and lilies; and a wind arose,
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
This way and that, in many a wild festoon

¹A golden apple like those which grew in the gardens
of the Hesperides.

²Mountain-nymph.

³Messenger of the gods.

⁴Amaracus is the modern marjoram; asphodel is a
lily-shaped plant.

Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs
With bunch and berry and flower through
and through.

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
And o'er him flowed a golden cloud, and
leaned

Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
Then first I heard the voice of her to whom
Coming through heaven, like a light that
grows

Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
Proffer of royal power, ample rule
Unquestioned, overflowing revenue
Wherewith to embellish state, 'from many a
vale

And river-sundered champaign clothed with
corn,

Or labored mine undrainable of ore.
Honor,' she said, 'and homage, tax and toll,
From many an inland town and haven large,
Mast-thronged beneath her shadowing cita-
del

In glassy bays among her tallest towers.'

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Still she spake on and still she spake of
power,

'Which in all action is the end of all;
Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred
And throned of wisdom—from all neighbor
crowns

Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
Fail from the scepter-staff. Such boon from
me,

From me, heaven's queen, Paris, to thee
king-born,

A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in
power

Only, are likest Gods, who have attained
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss
In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of
power

Flattered his spirit; but Pallas where she
stood

Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs

O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
 Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
 The while, above, her full and earnest eye
 Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek
 Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply:
 'Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
 These three alone lead life to sovereign
 power.

Yet not for power (power of herself
 Would come uncalled for) but to live by law,
 Acting the law we live by without fear;
 And, because right is right, to follow right
 Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Again she said: 'I woo thee not with gifts.
 Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
 To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
 So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,

If gazing on divinity disrobed
 Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,
 Unbiased by self-profit, O, rest thee sure
 That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,

So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,
 Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,
 To push thee forward through a life of
 shocks,

Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
 Sinewed with action, and the full-grown will,
 Circled through all experiences, pure law,
 Commensure perfect freedom.'

"Here she ceased,

And Paris pondered, and I cried, 'O Paris,
 Give it to Pallas!' but he heard me not,
 Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Idalian¹ Aphrodite beautiful,
 Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian
 wells,

With rosy slender fingers backward drew
 From her warm brows and bosom her deep
 hair

Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
 And shoulder; from the violets her light foot
 Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
 Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
 Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

¹Idalium and Paphos were towns in Cyprus where Aphrodite was specially worshipped.

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,
 The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh
 Half-whispered in his ear, 'I promise thee
 The fairest and most loving wife in Greece.'
 She spoke and laughed; I shut my sight for
 fear;

But when I looked, Paris had raised his arm,
 And I beheld great Herë's angry eyes,
 As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
 And I was left alone within the bower;
 And from that time to this I am alone,
 And I shall be alone until I die.

"Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Fairest—why fairest wife? am I not fair?
 My love hath told me so a thousand times.
 Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
 When I passed by, a wild and wanton pard,²
 Eyed like the evening star, with playful
 tail
 Crouched fawning in the weed. Most lov-
 ing is she?

Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my
 arms
 Were wound about thee, and my hot lips
 pressed
 Close, close to thine in that quick-falling
 dew
 Of fruitful kisses, thick as autumn rains
 Flash in the pools of whirling Simois!

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 They³ came, they cut away my tallest pines,
 My tall dark pines, that plumed the craggy
 ledge

High over the blue gorge, and all between
 The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
 Fostered the callow eaglet—from beneath
 Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark
 morn

The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat
 Low in the valley. Never, never more
 Shall lone Ceneone see the morning mist
 Sweep through them; never see them overlaid
 With narrow moonlit slips of silver cloud,
 Between the loud stream and the trembling
 stars.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 I wish that somewhere in the ruined folds,

²Leopard.

³Shipwrights, who cut down the pines to make ships for Paris's journey to Sparta.

Among the fragments tumbled from the
glens,
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her
The Abominable,¹ that uninvited came
Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
And bred this change; that I might speak my
mind,
And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
In this green valley, under this green hill,
Even on this hand, and sitting on this stone?
Sealed it with kisses? watered it with tears?
O happy tears, and how unlike to these!
O happy heaven, how canst thou see my
face?
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my
weight?
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating
cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth,
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live;
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids; let me die.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more and
more,
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost
hills,
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born. Her child!—a shudder comes
Across me: never child be born of me,
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
Walking the cold and starless road of death
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come
forth

¹Eris, goddess of strife.

Talk with the wild Cassandra,² for she says
A fire dances before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ears of arméd men.
What this may be I know not, but I know
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire."

THE PALACE OF ART³

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.
I said, "O Soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well."

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnished
brass,
I chose. The rangéd ramparts bright
From level meadow-bases of deep grass
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf
The rock rose clear, or winding stair.
My soul would live alone unto herself
In her high palace there.

And "while the world runs round and
round," I said,
"Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his steadfast
shade
Sleeps on his luminous ring."

²Daughter of Priam, who predicted the destruction of Troy but was thought to be mad.

³Published in 1832, but much altered in later editions. Tennyson prefixed to the poem the following explanation:

I send you here a sort of allegory
(For you will understand it), of a soul,
A sinful soul possessed of many gifts,
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,
That did love Beauty only (Beauty seen
In all varieties of mold and mind)
And Knowledge for its beauty; or if Good,
Good only for its beauty, seeing not
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge are three sisters
That dote upon each other, friends to man,
Living together under the same roof,
And never can be sundered without tears.
And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be
Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie
Howling in outer darkness. Not for this
Was common clay ta'en from the common earth,
Molded by God, and tempered with the tears
Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

To which my soul made answer readily·

“Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
In this great mansion, that is built for me,
So royal-rich and wide.”

Four courts I made, East, West and South
and North,

In each a squared lawn, wherefrom
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth
A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a
row

Cf cloisters, branched like mighty woods,
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow
Cf spouted fountain-floods;

And round the roofs a gilded gallery
That lent broad verge to distant lands,
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the
sky
Dipped down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one
swell

Across the mountain streamed below
In misty folds, that floating as they fell
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seemed
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up
A cloud of incense of all odor steamed
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, “And who shall gaze
upon
My palace with unblinded eyes,
While this great bow will waver in the sun,
And that sweet incense rise?”

For that sweet incense rose and never failed,
And, while day sank or mounted higher,
The light aerial gallery, golden-railed,
Burned like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stained and
traced,
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires
From shadowed grotts of arches interlaced,
And tipped with frost-like spires.

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,
Through which the livelong day my soul did
pass,
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace
stood,
All various, each a perfect whole
From living Nature, fit for every mood
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green and
blue,
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
Where with puffed cheek the belted hunter
blew
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seemed all dark and red—a tract o
sand,
And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low large moon.

One showed an iron coast and angry waves.
You seemed to hear them climb and fall
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing
caves,
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain,
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,
And hoary to the wind.

And one a foreground black with stones and
slags;
Beyond, a line of heights; and higher
All barred with long white cloud the scorn-
ful crags;
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray twilight
poured
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,
 As fit for every mood of mind,
 Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was
 there,
 Not less than truth designed.

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
 In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,
 Beneath branch-work of costly sardonyx
 Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-walled city on the sea,
 Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
 Wound with white roses, slept Saint Cecily;¹
 An angel looked at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise
 A group of Houris² bowed to see
 The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes
 That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son³
 In some fair space of sloping greens
 Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
 And watched by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,
 To list a foot-fall, ere he saw
 The wood-nymph, stayed the Ausonian
 King⁴ to hear
 Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrailed,
 And many a tract of palm and rice,
 The throne of Indian Cama⁵ slowly sailed
 A summer fanned with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasped,
 From off her shoulder backward borne;
 From one hand drooped a crocus; one hand
 grasped
 The mild bull's golden horn.⁶

¹St. Cecilia was said to have invented the organ.

²The virgins who, according to the Koran, attend upon the faithful Mahometan in Paradise.

³King Arthur. Tennyson tells the story of his death in *The Passing of Arthur*.

⁴Numa, legislator and second king of Rome, was said to have been instructed in the art of government by the wood-nymph Egeria.

⁵The god of love in Hindu mythology.

⁶Europa while gathering flowers was carried off by Zeus under the form of a bull.

Or else flushed Ganymede, his rosy thigh
 Half-buried in the eagle's down,
 Sole as a flying star shot through the sky
 Above the pillared town.⁷

Nor these alone; but every legend fair
 Which the supreme Caucasian mind
 Carved out of Nature for itself was there,
 Not less than life designed.

Then in the towers I placed great bells that
 swung,
 Moved of themselves, with silver sound;
 And with choice paintings of wise men I
 hung
 The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,
 Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild;
 And there the world-worn Dante grasped his
 song,
 And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest;⁸
 A million wrinkles carved his skin;
 A hundred winters snowed upon his breast,
 From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set
 Many an arch high up did lift,
 And angels rising and descending met
 With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely planned
 With cycles of the human tale
 Of this wide world, the times of every land
 So wrought they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,
 Toiled onward, pricked with goads and
 stings;
 Here played, a tiger, rolling to and fro
 The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or
 bind
 All force in bonds that might endure,
 And here once more like some sick man de-
 clined,
 And trusted any cure.

⁷Ganymede was carried off by the eagle of Zeus to become Zeus's cup-bearer.

⁸Homer.

But over these she trod; and those great
bells

Began to chime. She took her throne;
She sat betwixt the shining oriels,
To sing her songs alone.

And through the topmost oriels' colored
flame

Two godlike faces gazed below;
Plato the wise, and large-browed Verulam,¹
The first of those who know.

And all those names that in their motion
were

Full-welling fountain-heads of change,
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazoned fair
In diverse raiment strange;

Through which the lights, rose, amber, em-
erald, blue,

Flushed in her temples and her eyes,
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon,²
drew
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
Her low preamble all alone,
More than my soul to hear her echoed song
Throb through the ribbed stone;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,
Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, lord of the visible earth,
Lord of the senses five;

Communing with herself: "All these are
mine,
And let the world have peace or wars,
'Tis one to me." She—when young night
divine

Crowned dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils—
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,³
And pure quintessences of precious oils
In hollowed moons of gems,

¹Francis Bacon.

²A colossal Egyptian statue (really of Amenophis) which was said to give forth a musical sound when first struck by the rays of the rising sun.

³In lamps arranged like wreaths and garlands.

To mimic heaven; and clapped her hands
and cried,

"I marvel if my still delight
In this great house so royal-rich and wide
Be flattered to the height.

"O all things fair to sate my various eyes!
O shapes and hues that please me well!

O silent faces of the Great and Wise,
My Gods, with whom I dwell!

"O Godlike isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening droves
of swine
That range on yonder plain.

"In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,
They graze and wallow, breed and sleep;
And oft some brainless devil enters in,
And drives them to the deep."⁴

Then of the moral instinct would she prate
And of the rising from the dead,
As hers by right of full-accomplished Fate;
And at the last she said:

"I take possession of man's mind and deed.
I care not what the sects may brawl.
I sit as God holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all."

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth
Flashed through her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prospered; so three
years

She prospered; on the fourth she fell,
Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,
Struck through with pangs of hell.⁵

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.

⁴See St. Mark, v, 13.

⁵See Acts, xii, 21-23.

When she would think, where'er she turned
her sight

The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote, "Mene, mene,"¹ and divided quite
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude
Fell on her, from which mood was born
Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood
Laughter at her self-scorn.

"What! is not this my place of strength,"
she said,
"My spacious mansion built for me,
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were
laid
Since my first memory?"

But in dark corners of her palace stood
Uncertain shapes; and unawares
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of
blood,
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,
On corpses three-months-old at noon she
came,
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light
Or power of movement, seemed my soul,
Mid onward-sloping motions infinite
Making for one sure goal;

A still salt pool, locked in with bars of sand,
Left on the shore, that hears all night
The plunging seas draw backward from the
land
Their moon-led waters white;

A star that with the choral starry dance
Joined not, but stood, and standing saw
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance
Rolled round by one fixed law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curled.
"No voice," she shrieked in that lone hall,

"No voice breaks through the stillness of this
world;
One deep, deep silence all!"

She, moldering with the dull earth's molder-
ing sod,
Inwrapped tenfold in slothful shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal God,
Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,
And nothing saw, for her despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,
And ever worse with growing time,
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
And all alone in crime.

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round
With blackness as a solid wall,
Far off she seemed to hear the dully sound
Of human footsteps fall:

As in strange lands a traveler walking slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moonrise hears the low
Moan of an unknown sea;

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry
Of great wild beasts; then thinketh, "I have
found
A new land, but I die."

She howled aloud, "I am on fire within.
There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die?"

So when four years were wholly finished,
She threw her royal robes away.
"Make me a cottage in the vale," she said,
"Where I may mourn and pray.

"Yet pull not down my palace towers, that
are
So lightly, beautifully built;
Perchance I may return with others there
When I have purged my guilt."

¹ See the account of Belshazzar's feast, Daniel, v.

THE LOTOS-EATERS¹

"COURAGE!" he² said, and pointed toward
the land,

"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward
soon."

In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seeméd always afternoon.

All round the coast the languid air did
swoon,

Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And, like a downward smoke, the slender
stream

Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did
seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward
smoke,

Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some through wavering lights and shad-
ows broke,

Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land; far off, three mountain-
tops,

Three silent pinnacles of agéd snow,
Stood sunset-flushed; and, dewed with
showery drops,

Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven
copse.

The charmed sunset lingered low adown
In the red West; through mountain clefts the
dale

Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Bordered with palm, and many a winding
vale

And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seemed the
same!

And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters
came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they
gave

¹Published in 1832. The land of the lotos-eaters was visited by Ulysses, and Tennyson drew the framework of his poem from the *Odyssey*, IX, 82-97. The lotos referred to is an African plant, sometimes called the Cyrenean lotos.

²Ulysses.

To each, but whoso did receive of them
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seemed, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did
make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
Most weary seemed the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, "We will return no
more";

And all at once they sang, "Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer
roam."

CHORIC SONG

I

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the
blissful skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,
And through the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers
weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs
in sleep.

II

Why are we weighed upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?

All things have rest; why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown;
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
"There is no joy but calm!"—

Why should we only toil, the roof and crown
of things?

III

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
 The folded leaf is wooed from out the bud
 With winds upon the branch, and there
 Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
 Sun-steeped at noon, and in the moon
 Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
 Falls, and floats adown the air.
 Lo! sweetened with the summer light,
 The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
 Drops in a silent autumn night.
 All its allotted length of days
 The flower ripens in its place,
 Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
 Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
 Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
 Death is the end of life; ah, why
 Should life all labor be?
 Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
 And in a little while our lips are dumb.
 Let us alone. What is it that will last?
 All things are taken from us, and become
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
 To war with evil? Is there any peace
 In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
 All things have rest, and ripen toward the
 grave
 In silence—ripen, fall, and cease:
 Give us long rest or death, dark death, or
 dreamful ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward
 stream,
 With half-shut eyes ever to seem
 Falling asleep in a half-dream!
 To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
 Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the
 height;
 To hear each other's whispered speech;
 Eating the Lotos day by day,
 To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
 And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
 To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
 To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
 To muse and brood and live again in memory,
 With those old faces of our infancy
 Heaped over with a mound of grass,
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn
 of brass!

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
 And dear the last embraces of our wives
 And their warm tears; but all hath suffered
 change;
 For surely now our household hearths are
 cold,
 Our sons inherit us, our looks are strange,
 And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
 Or else the island princes over-bold
 Have eat our substance, and the minstrel
 sings
 Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
 Is there confusion in the little isle?
 Let what is broken so remain.
 The Gods are hard to reconcile;
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.
 There *is* confusion worse than death,
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
 Long labor unto aged breath,
 Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on the
 pilot-stars.

VII

But, propped on beds of amaranth and
 moly,¹
 How sweet—while warm airs lull us, blowing
 lowly—
 With half-dropped eyelid still,
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
 To watch the long bright river drawing
 slowly
 His waters from the purple hill—
 To hear the dewy echoes calling
 From cave to cave through the thick-twined
 vine—
 To watch the emerald-colored water falling
 Through many a woven acanthus-wreath²
 divine!
 Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling
 brine,
 Only to hear were sweet, stretched out be-
 neath the pine.

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak,
 The Lotos blows by every winding creek;

¹Amaranth was a fabled unfading flower; moly a fabled plant with black root and milk-white flower given by Hermes to Ulysses to protect him from the draught of Circe (*Odyssey*, x, 305).

²Acanthus is a plant with pendant leaves, reproduced on the capitals of Corinthian columns.

All day the wind breathes low with mellow
 tone;
 Through every hollow cave and alley
 lone
 Round and round the spicy downs the yel-
 low Lotos-dust is blown.
 We have had enough of action, and of motion
 we,
 Rolled to starboard, rolled to larboard, when
 the surge was seething free,
 Where the wallowing monster spouted his
 foam-fountains in the sea.
 Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an
 equal mind,
 In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie re-
 clined
 On the hills like Gods together, careless of
 mankind.
 For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts
 are hurled
 Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds
 are lightly curled
 Round their golden houses, girdled with the
 gleaming world;
 Where they smile in secret, looking over
 wasted lands,
 Blight and famine, plague and earthquake,
 roaring deeps and fiery sands,
 Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sink-
 ing ships, and praying hands.
 But they smile, they find a music centered
 in a doleful song
 Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient
 tale of wrong,
 Like a tale of little meaning though the words
 are strong;
 Chanted from an ill-used race of men that
 cleave the soil,
 Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with en-
 during toil,
 Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine
 and oil;
 Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis
 whispered—down in hell
 Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian
 valleys dwell,
 Resting weary limbs at last on beds of as-
 phodel.
 Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than
 toil, the shore
 Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind and
 wave and oar;
 O, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not
 wander more.

YOU ASK ME, WHY, THOUGH ILL AT EASE¹

You ask me, why, though ill at ease,
 Within this region I subsist,
 Whose spirits falter in the mist,
 And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,
 That sober-suited Freedom chose,
 The land, where girt with friends or foes
 A man may speak the thing he will;

A land of settled government,
 A land of just and old renown,
 Where Freedom slowly broadens down
 From precedent to precedent;

Where faction seldom gathers head,
 But, by degrees to fullness wrought,
 The strength of some diffusive thought
 Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
 Opinion, and induce a time
 When single thought is civil crime,
 And individual freedom mute,

Though power should make from land to
 land
 The name of Britain trebly great—
 Though every channel of the State
 Should fill and choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbor-mouth,
 Wild wind! I seek a warmer sky,
 And I will see before I die
 The palms and temples of the South.

ULYSSES²

IT LITTLE profits that an idle king,
 By this still hearth, among these barren
 crags,
 Matched with an agéd wife, I mete³ and dole
 Unequal laws unto a savage race,
 That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know
 not me.

¹Published in 1842.

²Published in 1842. This imagined speech of Ulysses (essentially modern in character) after his return to Ithaca and Penelope (his "agéd wife") was suggested to Tennyson, not by Homer, but by Dante's *Inferno*, xxvi, 90-142.

³Measure.

I cannot rest from travel; I will drink
Life to the lees. All times I have enjoyed
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with
those

*That loved me, and alone; on shore, and
when

Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades¹
Vexed the dim sea. I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known,—cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, govern-
ments,

Myself not least, but honored of them all,—
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
Gleams that untraveled world whose mar-
gin fades

For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!
As though to breathe were life! Life piled
on life

* Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains; but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard
myself,

And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the scepter and the isle,—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfill
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and through soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centered in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I
mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her
sail;

There gloom the dark, broad seas. My
mariners,

Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and
thought with me,—

That ever with a frolic welcome took

The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads,—you and I are
old;

Old age hath yet his honor and his toil.

Death closes all; but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs;
the deep

Moans round with many voices. Come, my
friends.

'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.

Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Though much is taken, much abides; and
though

We are not now that strength which in old
days

Moved earth and heaven, that which we
are, we are,—

One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in
will

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

TITHONUS²

THE woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapors weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies be-
neath,

And after many a summer dies the swan.

Me only cruel immortality
Consumes; I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-haired shadow roaming like a
dream

The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.

Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man—
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,

¹A group of seven stars whose rising and setting were
anciently believed to be accompanied by much rain.

²Published in 1860. The story of this poem is to be
found in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, 218–239.
Tithonus was loved by Aurora, goddess of dawn, who
made him immortal at his request. He, however, had
neglected to ask for the perpetuation of his youth,
so that he grew slowly older and more decrepit until he
finally asked the goddess for death. As she could not
give him death, she changed him into a grasshopper.

Who madest him thy chosen, that he seemed
To his great heart none other than a God!
I asked thee, "Give me immortality."

Then didst thou grant mine asking with a
smile,

Like wealthy men who care not how they
give.

But thy strong Hours¹ indignant worked their
wills,

And beat me down and marred and wasted
me,

And though they could not end me, left me
maimed

To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, though even
now,

Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with
tears

To hear me? Let me go; take back thy gift.
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most meet for
all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was
born.

Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoul-
ders pure,

And bosom beating with a heart renewed.
Thy cheek begins to redden through the
gloom,

Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild
team²

Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke,
arise,

And shake the darkness from their loosened
manes,

And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy
tears,

And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?

"The Gods themselves cannot recall their
gifts."

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch—if I be he that watched—
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt
my blood

Glow with the glow that slowly crimsoned all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-
warm

With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kissed
Whispering I knew not what of wild and
sweet,

Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.³

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East;
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the
steam

Floats up from those dim fields about the
homes

Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground.
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave;
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn,
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

LOCKSLEY HALL⁴

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as
yet 'tis early morn;
Leave me here, and when you want me,
sound upon the bugle-horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old,
the curlews⁵ call,
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying
over Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks
the sandy tracts,
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into
cataracts.

¹See the second note to *Ænone*, above, p. 418.

²Published in 1842.

³Birds of the snipe family.

¹Goddesses of the seasons.

²The horses which drew Dawn's chariot.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement,
ere I went to rest,
Did I look on great Orion¹ sloping slowly to
the west.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads,² rising
through the mellow shade,
Glitter like a swarm of fireflies tangled in a
silver braid.

Here about the beach I wandered, nourish-
ing a youth sublime
With the fairy tales of science, and the long
result of time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful
land reposed;
When I clung to all the present for the
promise that it closed;

When I dipped into the future far as human
eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world and all the won-
der that would be.—

In the spring a fuller crimson comes upon the
robin's breast;
In the spring the wanton lapwing gets him-
self another crest;

In the spring a livelier iris changes on the
burnished dove;
In the spring a young man's fancy lightly
turns to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than
should be for one so young,
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute
observance hung.

And I said, "My cousin Amy, speak, and
speak the truth to me,
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being
sets to thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a
color and a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the
northern night.

And she turned—her bosom shaken with a
sudden storm of sighs—
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of
hazel eyes—

¹The constellation.

²A group of stars.

Saying, "I have hid my feelings, fearing they
should do me wrong;"

Saying, "Dost thou love me, cousin?" weep-
ing, "I have loved thee long."

Love took up the glass of Time, and turned
it in his glowing hands;

Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in
golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on
all the chords with might;

Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling,
passed in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we
hear the cospes ring,
And her whisper thronged my pulses with the
fullness of the spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch
the stately ships,
And our spirits rushed together at the touch-
ing of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my Amy,
mine no more!
O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the bar-
ren, barren shore!

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all
songs have sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a
shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy?—having
known me—to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower
heart than mine!

Yet it shall be; thou shalt lower to his level
day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse to
sympathize with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is; thou art
mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have
weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have
spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer
than his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy; think not
they are glazed with wine.
Go to him, it is thy duty; kiss him, take his
hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain
is overwrought;
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him
with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to
understand—
Better thou wert dead before me, though I
slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the
heart's disgrace,
Rolled in one another's arms, and silent in a
last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against
the strength of youth!
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from
the living truth!

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from
honest Nature's rule!
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straitened
forehead of the fool!

Well—'tis well that I should bluster!—Hadst
thou less unworthy proved—
Would to God—for I had loved thee more
than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which
bears but bitter fruit?
I will pluck it from my bosom, though my
heart be at the root.

Never, though my mortal summers to such
length of years should come
As the many-wintered crow that leads the
clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records
of the mind?
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as
I knew her, kind?

I remember one that perished; sweetly did
she speak and move;
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at
was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for
the love she bore?
No—she never loved me truly; love is love for
evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorned of devils!¹ this is
truth the poet² sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remem-
bering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest
thy heart be put to proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when the
rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art
staring at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the
shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing
to his drunken sleep,
To thy widowed marriage-pillows, to the
tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the "Never, never," whis-
pered by the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the ring-
ing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient
kindness on thy pain.
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow; get thee
to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a
tender voice will cry.
'Tis a purer life than thine, a lip to drain thy
trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down; my latest
rival brings thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from
the mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a
dearness not his due.
Half is thine and half is his; it will be worthy
of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy
petty part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching
down a daughter's heart.

¹The allusion is to *Paradise Lost*, Bks. I and II.

²Dante, *Inferno*, v, 121-123.

"They were dangerous guides the feelings—
she herself was not exempt—
Truly, she herself had suffered"—Perish in
thy self-contempt!

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy! wherefore
should I care?

I myself must mix with action, lest I wither
by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting
upon days like these?

Every door is barred with gold, and opens
but to golden keys.

Every gate is thronged with suitors, all the
markets overflow.

I have but an angry fancy; what is that
which I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the
foeman's ground,

When the ranks are rolled in vapor, and the
winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt
that Honor feels,
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at
each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn
that earlier page.

Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou won-
drous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt
before the strife,

When I heard my days before me, and the
tumult of my life;

Yearning for the large excitement that the
coming years would yield,

Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves
his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near
and nearer drawn,

Sees in heaven the light of London flaring
like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone
before him then,

Underneath the light he looks at, in among
the throngs of men;

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever
reaping something new;

That which they have done but earnest of
the things that they shall do.

For I dipped into the future, far as human
eye could see,

Saw the Vision of the world, and all the
wonder that would be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies
of magic sails,

Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down
with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and
there rained a ghastly dew

From the nations' airy navies grappling in
the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the
south-wind rushing warm,

With the standards of the peoples plunging
through the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and
the battle-flags were furled

In the Parliament of man, the Federation of
the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold
a fretful realm in awe,

And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapped
in universal law.

So I triumphed ere my passion sweeping
through me left me dry,

Left me with the palsied heart, and left me
with the jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here
are out of joint.

Science moves, but slowly, slowly, creeping
on from point to point;

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion,
creeping nigher,

Glares at one that nods and winks behind a
slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not through the ages one in-
creasing purpose runs,

And the thoughts of men are widened with
the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest
of his youthful joys,
Though the deep heart of existence beat for
ever like a boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I
linger on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is
more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and
he bears a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the
stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding
on the bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion were a
target for their scorn.

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a
moldered string?
I am shamed through all my nature to have
loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness!
woman's pleasure, woman's pain—
Nature made them blinder motions bounded
in a shallower brain.

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy pas-
sions, matched with mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as
water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing.
Ah, for some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my
life began to beat,

Where in wild Mahratta-battle¹ fell my
father evil-starred;—
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish
uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wan-
der far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways
of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons
and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in clus-
ter, knots of Paradise.

¹The Mahrattas are a Hindu people.

Never comes the trader, never floats an
European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings
the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossomed bower, hangs
the heavy-fruited tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple
spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more
than in this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the
thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramped no longer shall
have scope and breathing space;
I will take some savage woman, she shall
rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinewed, they shall dive,
and they shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl
their lances in the sun;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the
rainbows of the brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring 'over mis-
erable books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I
know my words are wild,
But I count the gray barbarian lower than
the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of
our glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a
beast with lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me
were sun or clime?
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files
of time—

I that rather held it better men should per-
ish one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like
Joshua's moon in Ajalon!²

²See Joshua, x, 12-13.

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward,
forward let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever down the
ringing grooves of change.¹

"Through the shadow of the globe we sweep
into the younger day;
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of
Cathay.²

Mother-Age,—for mine I knew not,—help
me as when life begun;
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the
lightnings, weigh the sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit
hath not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well through
all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell
to Locksley Hall!
Now for me the woods may wither, now for
me the roof-tree fall.

* Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening
over heath and holt,
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast
a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail
or fire or snow;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward,
and I go.

SIR GALAHAD³

My good blade carves the casques⁴ of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splintered spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel;

¹Tennyson explained that when he rode on the first train from Liverpool to Manchester in 1830 he supposed that the wheels ran in grooves, and so used the word in this line.

²China.

³Published in 1842. The story of Sir Galahad is told by Malory in the *Morte d'Arthur*, Bks. XI-XVII (other matters are also treated in some of these books), and by Tennyson in *The Holy Grail*.

⁴Helmets.

They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favors fall!
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall;
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bowed in crypt and shrine;
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill;
So keep I fair through faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,⁵
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns.
Then by some secret shrine I ride;
I hear a voice, but none are there;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
I find a magic bark.
I leap on board; no helmsman steers;
I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light!
Three angels bear the Holy Grail;⁶
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And starlike mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
Through dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.

⁵When the crescent moon sets in clouds.

⁶The vessel in which Christ's blood was caught as he hung upon the cross. It was said to have been brought to Britain by Joseph of Arimathea, and it became an object of search among Arthur's knights. It could only be found, however, by the pure in heart and Galahad alone beheld it.

The tempest crackles on the leads,¹
 And, ringing, springs from brand and mail;
 But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
 And gilds the driving hail.
 I leave the plain, I climb the height;
 No branchy thicket shelter yields;
 But blessed forms in whistling storms
 Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given
 Such hope, I know not fear;
 I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
 That often meet me here.
 I muse on joy that will not cease,
 Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
 Pure lilies of eternal peace,
 Whose odors haunt my dreams;
 And, stricken by an angel's hand,
 This mortal armor that I wear,
 This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
 And touched, are turned to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
 And through the mountain-walls
 A rolling organ-harmony
 Swells up and shakes and falls.
 Then move the trees, the copses nod,
 Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
 "O just and faithful knight of God!
 Ride on! the prize is near."
 So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
 By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
 All-armed I ride, whate'er betide,
 Until I find the Holy Grail.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK²

BREAK, break, break,
 On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
 And I would that my tongue could utter
 The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
 That he shouts with his sister at play!
 O well for the sailor lad,
 That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
 To their haven under the hill;
 But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
 And the sound of a voice that is still!

¹On the roofs, covered with lead.

²Published in 1842. One of Tennyson's first attempts to express his grief over the death of A. H. Hallam.

Break, break, break,
 At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
 But the tender grace of a day that is dead
 Will never come back to me.

SONGS FROM THE PRINCESS³

I

THE splendor falls on castle walls
 And snowy summits old in story;
 The long light shakes across the lakes,
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
 dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
 And thinner, clearer, farther going!
 O sweet and far from cliff and scar
 The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying,
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
 dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
 They faint on hill or field or river;
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
 And grow for ever and for ever.
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
 And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying,
 dying.

II

TEARS, idle tears, I know not what they
 mean,
 Tears from the depth of some divine despair
 Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
 In looking on the happy autumn-fields,
 And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
 That brings our friends up from the under-
 world,
 Sad as the last which reddens over one
 That sinks with all we love below the verge;
 So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer
 dawns
 The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds

³Published in 1847. The first of these songs was, however, added in 1848, and the third in 1850.

To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering
square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no
more.

Dear as remembered kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feigned
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more!

III

HOME they brought her warrior dead;
She nor swooned nor uttered cry.
All her maidens, watching, said,
"She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Called him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stepped,
Took the face-cloth from the face;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee—
Like summer tempest came her tears—
"Sweet my child, I live for thee."

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.¹

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

¹Published in 1850. The poems were gradually written in the period between the death of Arthur Henry Hallam on 15 September, 1833, and the date of publication. At the time of his death Hallam was engaged to Tennyson's sister Emily. His body was brought to England by sea (he had died in Vienna) and was buried at Clevedon, on the Bristol Channel, on 3 January, 1834. Clevedon Court was the residence of Hallam's maternal grandfather. Tennyson says: "It must be remembered that this is a poem, *not* an actual biography. . . . The different moods of sorrow as in a drama are dramatically given, and my

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest, manhood, thou.
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

conviction that fear, doubts, and suffering will find answer and relief only through Faith in a God of Love. 'T is not always the author speaking of himself, but the voice of the human race speaking through him." Tennyson also says: "The sections were written at many different places, and as the phases of our intercourse came to my memory and suggested them. I did not write them with any view of weaving them into a whole, or for publication, until I found that I had written so many." This circumstance of the poem's composition has given room for differences of opinion concerning the period of time covered in it. Some, imagining that Tennyson wrote, as it were, an historical record of his grief, and connecting allusions in the sections with actual happenings, hold that the period covered by the poem is 1833-1842. More probably, however, the internal chronology of the poem is independent of the actual order of events, and the period of time covered is not quite three years. The following table indicates the chronology, the Christmas sections marking the major divisions of the poem:

Section XI,	Early Autumn, 1833.
xv,	Later Autumn.
xxxviii-xxx,	Christmas, 1833.
xxxviii-	
xxxix,	Spring.
Lxxii,	First Anniversary, September, 1834.
	Christmas, 1834.
Lxxxviii,	Delaying Spring.
Lxxxiii,	
Lxxxvi,	
Lxxxviii,	Spring.
Lxxxix, xc,	
xcviii,	Summer.
xcix,	Second Anniversary.
civ, cv,	Christmas, 1835.
cvi,	New Year's Day.
cvi,	Winter.
cxv, cxvi,	Spring.

Tennyson sometimes referred to *In Memoriam* as "The Way of the Soul"; it is "a journey from the first stupor and confusion of grief, through a growing acquiescence often disturbed by the recurrence of pain, to an almost unclouded peace and joy. The anguish of wounded love passes into the triumph of love over sorrow, time, and death. The soul, at first, almost sunk in the feeling of loss, finds itself at last freed from regret and yet strengthened in affection. It pines no longer for the vanished hand and silent voice; it is filled with the consciousness of union with the spirit. The world, which once seemed to it a mere echo of its sorrow, has become the abode of that immortal Love, at once divine and human, which includes the living and the dead" (A. C. Bradley, *Commentary*, p. 27, from which the above Table has also been adapted).

Our little systems have their day;
 They have their day and cease to be;
 They are but broken lights of thee,
 And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know,
 For knowledge is of things we see;
 And yet we trust it comes from thee,
 A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
 But more of reverence in us dwell;
 That mind and soul, according well,
 May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
 We mock thee when we do not fear:
 But help thy foolish ones to bear;
 Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seemed my sin in me,
 What seemed my worth since I began;
 For merit lives from man to man,
 And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
 Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
 I trust he lives in thee, and there
 I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
 Confusions of a wasted youth;
 Forgive them where they fail in truth,
 And in thy wisdom make me wise.

I

I held it truth, with him¹ who sings
 To one clear harp in divers tones,
 That men may rise on stepping-stones
 Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years
 And find in loss a gain to match?
 Or reach a hand through time to catch
 The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drowned,
 Let darkness keep her raven gloss.
 Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
 To dance with Death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
 The long result of love, and boast,
 "Behold the man that loved and lost,
 But all he was is overworn."

II

Old yew, which graspest at the stones
 That name the underlying dead,
 Thy fibers net the dreamless head,
 Thy roots are wrapped about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
 And bring the firstling to the flock;
 And in the dusk of thee the clock
 Beats out the little lives of men.

O, not for thee the glow, the bloom,
 Who changest not in any gale,
 Nor branding summer suns avail
 To touch thy thousand years of gloom;

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
 Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
 I seem to fail from out my blood
 And grow incorporate into thee.

III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
 O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
 O sweet and bitter in a breath,
 What whispers from thy lying lip?

"The stars," she whispers, "blindly run;
 A web is woven across the sky;
 From out waste places comes a cry,
 And murmurs from the dying sun;

"And all the phantom, Nature, stands—
 With all the music in her tone,
 A hollow echo of my own,—
 A hollow form with empty hands."

And shall I take a thing so blind,
 Embrace her as my natural good;
 Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
 Upon the threshold of the mind?

IV

To Sleep I give my powers away;
 My will is bondsman to the dark;
 I sit within a helmless bark,
 And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,
 That thou shouldst fail from thy desire,
 Who scarcely darest to inquire,
 "What is it makes me beat so low?"

¹Tennyson thought, in 1880, that his allusion was to Goethe.

Something it is which thou hast lost,
 Some pleasure from thine early years.
 Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,
 That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
 All night below the darkened eyes;
 With morning wakes the will, and cries,
 "Thou shalt not be the fool of loss."

V

I sometimes hold it half a sin
 To put in words the grief I feel;
 For words, like Nature, half reveal
 And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
 A use in measured language lies;
 The sad mechanic exercise,
 Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
 Like coarsest clothes against the cold;
 But that large grief which these enfold
 Is given in outline and no more.

VI

One writes, that "other friends remain,"
 That "loss is common to the race"—
 And common is the commonplace,
 And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
 My own less bitter, rather more.
 Too common! Never morning wore
 To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
 Who pledgedst now thy gallant son,
 A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
 Hath stilled the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
 Thy sailor,—while thy head is bowed,
 His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
 Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
 At that last hour to please him well;
 Who mused on all I had to tell,
 And something written, something thought;

Expecting still his advent home;
 And ever met him on his way
 With wishes, thinking, "here to-day,"
 Or "here to-morrow will he come."

O, somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,
 That sittest ranging golden hair;
 And glad to find thyself so fair,
 Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows
 In expectation of a guest;
 And thinking "this will please him best,"
 She takes a riband or a rose:

For he will see them on to-night;
 And with the thought her color burns;
 And, having left the glass, she turns
 Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turned, the curse
 Had fallen, and her future lord
 Was drowned in passing through the ford,
 Or killed in falling from his horse.

O, what to her shall be the end?
 And what to me remains of good?
 To her perpetual maidenhood,
 And unto me no second friend.

VII

Dark house,¹ by which once more I stand
 Here in the long unlovely street,
 Doors, where my heart was used to beat
 So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasped no more—
 Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
 And like a guilty thing I creep
 At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
 The noise of life begins again,
 And ghastly through the drizzling rain
 On the bald street breaks the blank day.

VIII

A happy lover who has come
 To look on her that loves him well,
 Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,
 And learns her gone and far from home;

He saddens, all the magic light
 Dies off at once from bower and hall,
 And all the place is dark, and all
 The chambers emptied of delight:

¹In which Hallam lived, in London.

So find I every pleasant spot
 In which we two were wont to meet,
 The field, the chamber, and the street,
 For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
 In those deserted walks, may find
 A flower beat with rain and wind,
 Which once she fostered up with care;

So seems it in my deep regret,
 O my forsaken heart, with thee
 And this poor flower of poesy
 Which, little cared for, fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanished eye,
 I go to plant it on his tomb,
 That if it can it there may bloom,
 Or, dying, there at least may die.

IX

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore¹
 Sailest the placid ocean-plain
 With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
 Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn
 In vain; a favorable speed
 Ruffle thy mirrored mast, and lead
 Through prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
 Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor,² bright
 As our pure love, through early light
 Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;
 Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
 Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
 My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
 Till all my widowed race be run;
 Dear as the mother to the son,
 More than my brothers are to me.

X

I hear the noise about thy keel;
 I hear the bell struck in the night;
 I see the cabin-window bright;
 I see the sailor at the wheel.

¹Hallam's body was brought to England by sea, from Trieste.

²The morning star.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,
 And traveled men from foreign lands;
 And letters unto trembling hands;
 And, thy dark freight, a vanished life.

So bring him; we have idle dreams;
 This look of quiet flatters thus
 Our home-bred fancies. O, to us,
 The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
 That takes the sunshine and the rains,
 Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
 The chalice of the grapes of God;

Than if with thee the roaring wells
 Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine,
 And hands so often clasped in mine,
 Should toss with tangle and with shells.

XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,
 Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
 And only through the faded leaf
 The chestnut pattering to the ground;

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,³
 And on these dews that drench the furze,
 And all the silvery gossamers
 That twinkle into green and gold;

Calm and still light on yon great plain
 That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
 And crowded farms and lessening towers,
 To mingle with the bounding main;⁴

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
 These leaves that redden to the fall,
 And in my heart, if calm at all,
 If any calm, a calm despair;

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
 And waves that sway themselves in rest,
 And dead calm in that noble breast
 Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

XII

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
 To bear through heaven a tale of woe,
 Some dolorous message knit below
 The wild pulsation of her wings;

³Open country.

⁴Limiting sea.

Like her I go, I cannot stay;
 I leave this mortal ark behind,
 A weight of nerves without a mind,
 And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
 And reach the glow of southern skies,
 And see the sails at distance rise,
 And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying, "Comes he thus, my friend?
 Is this the end of all my care?"
 And circle moaning in the air,
 "Is this the end? Is this the end?"

And forward dart again, and play
 About the prow, and back return
 To where the body sits, and learn
 That I have been an hour away.

XIII

Tears of the widower, when he sees
 A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
 And moves his doubtful arms, and feels
 Her place is empty, fall like these;

Which weep a loss for ever new,
 A void where heart on heart reposed;
 And, where warm hands have pressed and
 closed,
 Silence, till I be silent too;

Which weep the comrade of my choice,
 An awful thought, a life removed,
 The human-hearted man I loved,
 A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come, Time, and teach me, many years,
 I do not suffer in a dream;
 For now so strange do these things seem,
 Mine eyes have leisure for their tears,

My fancies time to rise on wing,
 And glance about the approaching sails,
 As though they brought but merchants'
 bales,
 And not the burthen that they bring.

XIV

If one should bring me this report,
 That thou hadst touched the land to-day,
 And I went down unto the quay,
 And found thee lying in the port;

And standing, muffled round with woe,
 Should see thy passengers in rank
 Come stepping lightly down the plank,
 And beckoning unto those they know;

And if along with these should come
 The man I held as half-divine,
 Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
 And ask a thousand things of home;

And I should tell him all my pain,
 And how my life had drooped of late,
 And he should sorrow o'er my state
 And marvel what possessed my brain;

And I perceived no touch of change,
 No hint of death in all his frame,
 But found him all in all the same,
 I should not feel it to be strange.

XV

To-night the winds begin to rise
 And roar from yonder dropping day;
 The last red leaf is whirled away,
 The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest cracked, the waters curled,
 The cattle huddled on the lea;
 And wildly dash'd on tower and tree
 The sunbeam strikes along the world:

And but for fancies, which aver
 That all thy motions gently pass
 Athwart a plane of molten glass,¹
 I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud;
 And but for fear it is not so,
 The wild unrest that lives in woe
 Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
 And onward drags a laboring breast,
 And topples round the dreary west,
 A looming bastion fringed with fire.

XVI

What words are these have fallen from me?
 Can calm despair and wild unrest
 Be tenants of a single breast,
 Or Sorrow such a changeling be?

¹Across a calm sea.

Or doth she only seem to take
 The touch of change in calm or storm,
 But knows no more of transient form
 In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
 Hung in the shadow of a heaven?
 Or has the shock, so harshly given,
 Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
 And staggers blindly ere she sink?
 And stunned me from my power to think
 And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man
 Whose fancy fuses old and new,
 And flashes into false and true,
 And mingles all without a plan?

XVII

Thou comest, much wept for; such a breeze
 Compelled thy canvas, and my prayer
 Was as the whisper of an air
 To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
 Through circles of the bounding sky,
 Week after week; the days go by;
 Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou mayst roam,
 My blessing, like a line of light,
 Is on the waters day and night,
 And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
 Mid-ocean spare thee, sacred bark,
 And balmy drops in summer dark
 Slide from the bosom of the stars;

So kind an office hath been done,
 Such precious relics brought by thee,
 The dust of him I shall not see
 Till all my widowed race be run.

XVIII

'Tis well; 'tis something; we may stand
 Where he in English earth is laid,
 And from his ashes may be made
 The violet of his native land.

'Tis little; but it looks in truth
 As if the quiet bones were blest
 Among familiar names to rest
 And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head
 That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,
 And come, whatever loves to weep,
 And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, even yet, if this might be,
 I, falling on his faithful heart,
 Would breathing through his lips impart
 The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,
 And slowly forms the firmer mind,
 Treasuring the look it cannot find,
 The words that are not heard again.

XIX

The Danube to the Severn gave
 The darkened heart that beat no more;
 They laid him by the pleasant shore,
 And in the hearing of the wave.¹

There twice a day the Severn fills;
 The salt sea-water passes by,
 And hushes half the babbling Wye,
 And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hushed nor moved along,
 And hushed my deepest grief of all,
 When filled with tears that cannot fall,
 I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
 Is vocal in its wooded walls;
 My deeper anguish also falls,
 And I can speak a little then.

XX

The lesser griefs that may be said,
 That breathe a thousand tender vows,
 Are but as servants in a house
 Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is,
 And weep the fullness from the mind.
 "It will be hard," they say, "to find
 Another service such as this."

My lighter moods are like to these,
 That out of words a comfort win;
 But there are other griefs within,
 And tears that at their fountain freeze;

¹Clevedon Churchyard is near the point where the Severn River flows into Bristol Channel.

For by the hearth the children sit
Cold in that atmosphere of death,
And scarce endure to draw the breath,
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit;

But open converse is there none,
So much the vital spirits sink
To see the vacant chair, and think,
"How good! how kind! and he is gone."

XXI

I sing to him that rests below,
And, since the grasses round me wave,
I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveler hears me now and then,
And sometimes harshly will he speak:
"This fellow would make weakness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men."

Another answers: "Let him be,
He loves to make parade of pain,
That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes to constancy."

A third is wroth: "Is this an hour
For private sorrow's barren song,
When more and more the people throng
The chairs and thrones of civil power?"

"A time to sicken and to swoon,
When Science reaches forth her arms
To feel from world to world, and charms
Her secret from the latest moon?"

Behold, ye speak an idle thing;
Ye never knew the sacred dust.
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing;

And one is glad; her note is gay,
For now her little ones have ranged;
And one is sad; her note is changed,
Because her brood is stolen away.

XXII

The path by which we twain did go,
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,
Through four sweet years arose and fell,
From flower to flower, from snow to snow;

And we with singing cheered the way,
And, crowned with all the season lent,
From April on to April went,
And glad at heart from May to May.

But where the path we walked began
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
As we descended following Hope,
There sat the Shadow feared of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,
And spread his mantle dark and cold,
And wrapped thee formless in the fold,
And dulled the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, though I walk in haste,
And think that somewhere in the waste
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
Or breaking into song by fits,
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloaked from head to foot,¹

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I came,
Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, How changed from where it ran
Through lands where not a leaf was dumb,
But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan;

When each by turns was guide to each,
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed with
Thought
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,
And all was good that Time could bring,
And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood;

And many an old philosophy
On Argive heights divinely sang,
And round us all the thicket rang
To many a flute of Arcady.²

XXIV

And was the day of my delight
As pure and perfect as I say?
The very source and fount of day
Is dashed with wandering isles of night.

¹Death.

²The allusion is to Greek philosophy and poetry.

If all was good and fair we met,
 This earth had been the Paradise
 It never looked to human eyes
 Since our first sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief
 Makes former gladness loom so great?
 The lowness of the present state,
 That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
 A glory from its being far,
 And orb into the perfect star
 We saw not when we moved therein?

XXV

I know that this was Life,—the track
 Whereon with equal feet we fared;
 And then, as now, the day prepared
 The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
 As light as carrier-birds in air;
 I loved the weight I had to bear,
 Because it needed help of Love;

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
 When mighty Love would cleave in twain
 The lading of a single pain,
 And part it, giving half to him.

XXVI

Still onward winds the dreary way;
 I with it, for I long to prove
 No lapse of moons can canker Love,
 Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
 And goodness, and hath power to see
 Within the green the moldered tree,
 And towers fallen as soon as built—

O, if indeed that eye foresee
 Or see—in Him is no before—
 In more of life true life no more
 And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn
 Breaks hither over Indian seas,
 That Shadow waiting with the keys,
 To shroud me from my proper scorn.

XXVII

I envy not in any moods
 The captive void of noble rage,
 The linnet born within the cage,
 That never knew the summer woods;

I envy not the beast that takes
 His license in the field of time,
 Unfettered by the sense of crime,
 To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
 The heart that never plighted troth
 But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
 Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
 I feel it, when I sorrow most;
 'Tis better to have loved and lost
 Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of Christ.
 The moon is hid, the night is still;
 The Christmas bells from hill to hill
 Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
 From far and near, on mead and moor,
 Swell out and fail, as if a door
 Were shut between me and the sound;

Each voice four changes on the wind,
 That now dilate, and now decrease,
 Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
 Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
 I almost wished no more to wake,
 And that my hold on life would break
 Before I heard those bells again;

But they my troubled spirit rule,
 For they controlled me when a boy;
 They bring me sorrow touched with joy
 The merry, merry bells of Yule.

XXIX

With such compelling cause to grieve
 As daily vexes household peace,
 And chains regret to his decease,
 How dare we keep our Christmas-eve,

Which brings no more a welcome guest
 To enrich the threshold of the night
 With showered largess of delight
 In dance and song and game and jest?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs
 Entwine the cold baptismal font,
 Make one wreath more for Use and Wont,
 That guard the portals of the house;

Old sisters of a day gone by,
 Gray nurses, loving nothing new—
 Why should they miss their yearly due
 Before their time? They too will die.

xxx

With trembling fingers did we weave
 The holly round the Christmas hearth;
 A rainy cloud possessed the earth,
 And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall
 We gamboled, making vain pretense
 Of gladness, with an awful sense
 Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech;
 We heard them sweep the winter land;
 And in a circle hand-in-hand
 Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;
 We sung, though every eye was dim,
 A merry song we sang with him
 Last year; impetuously we sang.

We ceased; a gentler feeling crept
 Upon us: surely rest is meet.
 "They rest," we said, "their sleep is
 sweet,"
 And silence followed, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;
 Once more we sang: "They do not die
 Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
 Nor change to us, although they change;

"Rapt from the fickle and the frail
 With gathered power, yet the same,
 Pierces the keen seraphic flame
 From orb to orb, from veil to veil."

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
 Draw forth the cheerful day from night:

O Father, touch the east, and light
 The light that shone when Hope was born.

xxxI

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
 And home to Mary's house returned,
 Was this demanded—if he yearned
 To hear her weeping by his grave?

"Where wert thou, brother, those four
 days?"
 There lives no record of reply,
 Which telling what it is to die
 Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,
 The streets were filled with joyful sound,
 A solemn gladness even crowned
 The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
 The rest remaineth unrevealed;
 He told it not, or something sealed
 The lips of that Evangelist.¹

xxxII

Her eyes² are homes of silent prayer,
 Nor other thought her mind admits
 But, he was dead, and there he sits,
 And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
 All other, when her ardent gaze
 Roves from the living brother's face,
 And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
 Borne down by gladness so complete,
 She bows, she bathes the Savior's feet
 With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,
 Whose loves in higher love endure;
 What souls possess themselves so pure,
 Or is there blessedness like theirs?

xxxIII

O thou that after toil and storm
 Mayst seem to have reached a purer air,
 Whose faith has center everywhere,
 Nor cares to fix itself to form,

¹St. John (xi, 1-44).

²The eyes of Mary, the sister of Lazarus.

Leave thou thy sister when she prays
 Her early heaven, her happy views;
 Nor thou with shadowed hint confuse
 A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith through form is pure as thine,
 Her hands are quicker unto good.
 O, sacred be the flesh and blood
 To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe
 In holding by the law within,
 Thou fail not in a world of sin,
 And even for want of such a type.

XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me this,
 That life shall live for evermore,
 Else earth is darkness at the core,
 And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,
 Fantastic beauty; such as lurks
 In some wild poet, when he works
 Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?
 'Twere hardly worth my while to choose
 Of things all mortal, or to use
 A little patience ere I die;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
 Like birds the charming serpent draws
 To drop head-foremost in the jaws
 Of vacant darkness and to cease.

XXXV

Yet if some voice that man could trust
 Should murmur from the narrow house,
 "The cheeks drop in, the body bows;
 Man dies, nor is there hope in dust;"

Might I not say? "Yet even here,
 But for one hour, O Love, I strive
 To keep so sweet a thing alive."
 But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
 The sound of streams that swift or slow
 Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
 The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
 "The sound of that forgetful shore
 Will change my sweetness more and more,
 Half-dead to know that I shall die."

O me, what profits it to put
 An idle case? If Death were seen
 At first as Death, Love had not been,
 Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
 Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
 Had bruised the herb and crushed the
 grape,
 And basked and battered in the woods.

XXXVI

Though truths in manhood darkly join,
 Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
 We yield all blessing to the name
 Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
 Where truth in closest words shall fail,
 When truth embodied in a tale
 Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
 With human hands the creed of creeds
 In loveliness of perfect deeds,
 More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
 Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
 And those wild eyes that watch the wave
 In roarings round the coral reef.

XXXVII

Urania¹ speaks with darkened brow:
 "Thou pratest here where thou art least;
 This faith has many a purer priest,
 And many an abler voice than thou.

"Go down beside thy native rill,
 On thy Parnassus² set thy feet,
 And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
 About the ledges of the hill."

And my Melpomene³ replies,
 A touch of shame upon her cheek:
 "I am not worthy even to speak
 Of thy prevailing mysteries;

¹The heavenly muse, who reproves the poet for touching on revealed truth.

²The hill sacred to Apollo and the muses. The laurel, with which poets were crowned, grows on its slopes.

³Muse of tragedy, in this instance of elegy.

"For I am but an earthly Muse,
And owning but a little art
To lull with song an aching heart,
And render human love his dues;

"But brooding on the dear one dead,
And all he said of things divine,—
And dear to me as sacred wine
To dying lips is all he said,—

"I murmured, as I came along,
Of comfort clasped in truth revealed,
And loitered in the master's field,
And darkened sanctities with song."

XXXVIII

With weary steps I loiter on,
Though always under altered skies
The purple from the distance dies,
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
The herald melodies of spring,
But in the songs I love to sing
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
Survive in spirits rendered free,
Then are these songs I sing of thee
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX

Old warder of these buried bones,
And answering now my random stroke
With fruitful cloud and living smoke,
Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head,
To thee too comes the golden hour
When flower is feeling after flower;
But Sorrow,—fixed upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of men,—
What whispered from her lying lips?
Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,
And passes into gloom again.

XL

Could we forget the widowed hour
And look on Spirits breathed away,
As on a maiden in the day
When first she wears her orange-flower!

When crowned with blessing she doth rise
To take her latest leave of home,
And hopes and light regrets that come
Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,
And tears are on the mother's face,
As parting with a long embrace
She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,
Becoming as is meet and fit
A link among the days, to knit
The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit
In those great offices that suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!
How often shall her old fireside
Be cheered with tidings of the bride,
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,
And bring her babe, and make her boast,
Till even those that missed her most
Shall count new things as dear as old;

But thou and I have shaken hands,
Till growing winters lay me low;
My paths are in the fields I know,
And thine in undiscovered lands.

XLI

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
Did ever rise from high to higher,
As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,
As flies the lighter through the gross.

But thou art turned to something strange,
And I have lost the links that bound
Thy changes; here upon the ground,
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be—
That I could wing my will with might
To leap the grades of life and light,
And flash at once, my friend, to thee!

For though my nature rarely yields
To that vague fear implied in death,
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor
 An inner trouble I behold,
 A spectral doubt which makes me cold,
 That I shall be thy mate no more,

Though following with an upward mind
 The wonders that have come to thee,
 Through all the secular to-be,¹
 But evermore a life behind.

XLII

I vex my heart with fancies dim.
 He still outstripped me in the race;
 It was but unity of place
 That made me dream I ranked with him.

And so may Place retain us still,
 And he the much-beloved again,
 A lord of large experience, train
 To riper growth the mind and will;

And what delights can equal those
 That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
 When one that loves, but knows not, reaps
 A truth from one that loves and knows?

XLIII

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
 And every spirit's folded bloom
 Through all its intervital gloom
 In some long trance should slumber on;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
 Bare of the body, might it last,
 And silent traces of the past
 Be all the color of the flower:

So then were nothing lost to man;
 So that still garden of the souls
 In many a figured leaf enrolls
 The total world since life began;

And love will last as pure and whole
 As when he loved me here in Time,
 And at the spiritual prime²
 Rewaken with the dawning soul.

XLIV

How fares it with the happy dead?
 For here the man is more and more;

But he forgets the days before
 God shut the doorways of his head.³

The days have vanished, tone and tint,
 And yet perhaps the hoarding sense
 Gives out at times—he knows not
 whence—
 A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years—
 If Death so taste Lethean springs—
 May some dim touch of earthly things
 Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
 O, turn thee round, resolve the doubt;
 My guardian angel will speak out
 In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLV

The baby new to earth and sky,
 What time his tender palm is pressed
 Against the circle of the breast,
 Has never thought that "this is I;"

But as he grows he gathers much,
 And learns the use of "I" and "me,"
 And finds "I am not what I see,
 And other than the things I touch."

So rounds he to a separate mind
 From whence clear memory may begin,
 As through the frame that binds him in
 His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
 Which else were fruitless of their due,
 Had man to learn himself anew
 Beyond the second birth of death.

XLVI

We ranging down this lower track,
 The path we came by, thorn and flower,
 Is shadowed by the growing hour,
 Lest life should fail in looking back.

³The dead after this life may have no remembrance of life, like the living babe who forgets the time before the sutures of the skull are closed; yet the living babe grows in knowledge, and though the remembrance of his earliest days has vanished, yet with his increasing knowledge there comes a dreamy vision of what has been; it may be so with the dead; if so, resolve my doubts, *etc.* (Tennyson's note.) The notion that Brahma enters the body through one of the sutures of the skull is found in the *Upanishads*, and Tennyson may have known this.

¹Through all the ages of the future.

²Dawn.

So be it: there no shade can last
 In that deep dawn behind the tomb,
 But clear from marge to marge shall bloom
 The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time revealed,
 The fruitful hours of still increase;
 Days ordered in a wealthy peace,
 And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,
 A bounded field, nor stretching far;
 Look also, Love, a brooding star,
 A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

XLVII

That each, who seems a separate whole,
 Should move his rounds, and fusing all
 The skirts of self again, should fall
 Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet.
 Eternal form shall still divide
 The eternal soul from all beside;
 And I shall know him when we meet;

And we shall sit at endless feast,
 Enjoying each the other's good.
 What vaster dream can hit the mood
 Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
 Before the spirits fade away,
 Some landing-place, to clasp and say,
 "Farewell! We lose ourselves in light."

XLVIII

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
 Were taken to be such as closed
 Grave doubts and answers here proposed,
 Then these were such as men might scorn.

Her care is not to part and prove;
 She takes, when harsher moods remit,
 What slender shade of doubt may flit,
 And makes it vassal unto love;

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,
 But better serves a wholesome law,
 And holds it sin and shame to draw
 The deepest measure from the chords;

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
 But rather loosens from the lip
 Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
 Their wings in tears, and skim away.

XLIX

From art, from nature, from the schools,
 Let random influences glance,
 Like light in many a shivered lance
 That breaks about the dappled pools.

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
 The fancy's tenderest eddy wreath,
 The slightest air of song shall breathe
 To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,
 But blame not thou the winds that make
 The seeming-wanton ripple break,
 The tender-penciled shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears
 Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,
 Whose muffled motions blindly drown
 The bases of my life in tears.

L

Be near me when my light is low,
 When the blood creeps, and the nerves
 prick
 And tingle; and the heart is sick,
 And all the wheels of being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
 Is racked with pangs that conquer trust;
 And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
 And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
 And men the flies of latter spring,
 That lay their eggs, and sting and sing
 And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
 To point the term of human strife,
 And on the low dark verge of life
 The twilight of eternal day.

LI

Do we indeed desire the dead
 Should still be near us at our side?
 Is there no baseness we would hide?
 No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
 I had such reverence for his blame,
 See with clear eye some hidden shame
 And I be lessened in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue.
 Shall love be blamed for want of faith?
 There must be wisdom with great Death;
 The dead shall look me through and through.

Be near us when we climb or fall;
 Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
 With larger other eyes than ours,
 To make allowance for us all.

LII

I cannot love thee as I ought,
 For love reflects the thing beloved;
 My words are only words, and moved
 Upon the topmost froth of thought.

"Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,"
 The Spirit of true love replied;
 "Thou canst not move me from thy side,
 Nor human frailty do me wrong.

"What keeps a spirit wholly true
 To that ideal which he bears?
 What record? not the sinless years
 That breathed beneath the Syrian blue;¹

"So fret not, like an idle girl,
 That life is dashed with flecks of sin.
 Abide; thy wealth is gathered in,
 When Time hath Sundered shell from pearl."

LIII

How many a father have I seen,
 A sober man, among his boys,
 Whose youth was full of foolish noise,
 Who wears his manhood hale and green;

And dare we to this fancy give,²
 That had the wild oat not been sown,
 The soil, left barren, scarce had grown
 The grain by which a man may live?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound
 For life outliving heats of youth,
 Yet who would preach it as a truth
 To those that eddy round and round?

¹Not even the record of the life of Jesus.

²Yield.

Hold thou the good, define it well;
 For fear divine Philosophy
 Should push beyond her mark, and be
 Procress to the Lords of Hell.

LIV

O, yet we trust that somehow good
 Will be the final goal of ill,
 To pangs of nature, sins of will,
 Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
 That not one life shall be destroyed,
 Or cast as rubbish to the void,
 When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
 That not a moth with vain desire
 Is shriveled in a fruitless fire,
 Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
 I can but trust that good shall fall
 At last—far off—at last, to all,
 And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream; but what am I?
 An infant crying in the night;
 An infant crying for the light,
 And with no language but a cry.

LV

The wish, that of the living whole
 No life may fail beyond the grave,
 Derives it not from what we have
 The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
 That Nature lends such evil dreams?
 So careful of the type she seems,
 So careless of the single life,

That I, considering everywhere
 Her secret meaning in her deeds,
 And finding that of fifty seeds
 She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
 And falling with my weight of cares
 Upon the great world's altar-stairs
 That slope through darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
 And gather dust and chaff, and call
 To what I feel is Lord of all,
 And faintly trust the larger hope.

LVI

"So careful of the type?" but no.
 From scarpéd cliff and quarried stone
 She cries, "A thousand types are gone;
 I care for nothing, all shall go.

"Thou makest thine appeal to me:
 I bring to life, I bring to death;
 The spirit does but mean the breath:
 I know no more." And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seemed so fair,
 Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
 Who rolled the psalm to wintry skies,
 Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
 And love Creation's final law—
 Though Nature, red in tooth and claw
 With ravine, shrieked against his creed—

Who loved, who suffered countless ills,
 Who battled for the True, the Just,
 Be blown about the desert dust,
 *Or sealed within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,
 A discord. Dragons of the prime,¹
 That tare each other in their slime,
 Were mellow music matched with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!
 O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
 What hope of answer, or redress?
 Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVII

Peace; come away: the song of woe
 Is after all an earthly song.
 Peace; come away: we do him wrong
 To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale;
 But half my life I leave behind.
 Methinks my friend is richly shrined;
 But I shall pass, my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
 One set slow bell will seem to toll
 The passing of the sweetest soul
 That ever looked with human eyes.

¹Prehistoric monsters.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
 Eternal greetings to the dead;
 And "Ave, Ave, Ave," said,
 "Adieu, adieu," for evermore.

LVIII

In those sad words I took farewell.
 Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
 As drop by drop the water falls
 In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace
 Of hearts that beat from day to day,
 Half-conscious of their dying clay,
 And those cold crypts where they shall cease.

The high Muse answered: "Wherefore
 grieve
 Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?
 Abide a little longer here,
 And thou shalt take a nobler leave."

LIX

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
 No casual mistress, but a wife,
 My bosom-friend and half of life;
 As I confess it needs must be?

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
 Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
 And put thy harsher moods aside,
 If thou wilt have me wise and good?

My centered passion cannot move,
 Nor will it lessen from to-day;
 But I'll have leave at times to play
 As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
 With so much hope for years to come,
 That, howso'er I know thee, some
 Could hardly tell what name were thine.

LX

He passed, a soul of nobler tone;
 My spirit loved and loves him yet,
 Like some poor girl whose heart is set
 On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
 She finds the baseness of her lot,
 Half jealous of she knows not what,
 And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;
 She sighs amid her narrow days,
 Moving about the household ways,
 In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,
 And tease her till the day draws by;
 At night she weeps, "How vain am I!
 How should he love a thing so low?"

LXI

If, in thy second state sublime,
 Thy ransomed reason change replied
 With all the circle of the wise,
 The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
 How dimly characterized and slight,
 How dwarfed a growth of cold and night,
 How blanched with darkness must I grow!

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
 Where thy first form was made a man;
 I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can
 The soul of Shakespeare love thee more.

LXII

Though if an eye that's downward cast
 Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,
 Then be my love an idle tale
 And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once declined,
 When he was little more than boy,
 On some unworthy heart with joy,
 But lives to wed an equal mind,

And breathes a novel world, the while
 His other passion wholly dies,
 Or in the light of deeper eyes
 Is matter for a flying smile.

LXIII

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,
 And love in which my hound has part,
 Can hang no weight upon my heart
 In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these,
 As thou, perchance, art more than I,
 And yet I spare them sympathy,
 And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,
 As, unto vaster motions bound,
 The circuits of thine orbit round
 A higher height, a deeper deep.

LXIV

Dost thou look back on what hath been,
 As some divinely gifted man,
 Whose life in low estate began
 And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
 And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
 And breasts the blows of circumstance,
 And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known
 And lives to clutch the golden keys,
 To mold a mighty state's decrees,
 And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
 Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
 The pillar of a people's hope,
 The center of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
 When all his active powers are still,
 A distant dearness in the hill,
 A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
 While yet beside its vocal springs
 He played at counselors and kings,
 With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea
 And reaps the labor of his hands,
 Or in the furrow musing stands:
 "Does my old friend remember me?"

LXV

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt;
 I lull a fancy trouble-tossed
 With "Love's too precious to be lost,
 A little grain shall not be spilt."

And in that solace can I sing,
 Till out of painful phases wrought
 There flutters up a happy thought,
 Self-balanced on a lightsome wing;

Since we deserved the name of friends,
 And thine effect so lives in me,
 A part of mine may live in thee
 And move thee on to noble ends.

LXVI

You thought my heart too far diseased;
 You wonder when my fancies play
 To find me gay among the gay,
 Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crossed,
 Which makes a desert in the mind,
 Has made me kindly with my kind,
 And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided through the land,
 Whose jest among his friends is free,
 Who takes the children on his knee,
 And winds their curls about his hand.

He plays with threads, he beats his chair
 For pastime, dreaming of the sky;
 His inner day can never die,
 His night of loss is always there.

LXVII

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
 I know that in thy place of rest
 By that broad water of the west
 There comes a glory on the walls:

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
 As slowly steals a silver flame
 Along the letters of thy name,
 And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away,
 From off my bed the moonlight dies;
 And closing eaves of wearied eyes
 I sleep till dusk is dipped in gray;

And then I know the mist is drawn
 A lucid veil from coast to coast,
 And in the dark church like a ghost
 Thy tablet glimmers in the dawn.

LXVIII

When in the down I sink my head,
 Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my
 breath;
 Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not
 Death,
 Nor can I dream of thee as dead.

I walk as ere I walked forlorn,
 When all our path was fresh with dew,
 And all the bugle breezes blew
 Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,
 I find a trouble in thine eye,
 Which makes me sad I know not why,
 Nor can my dream resolve the doubt;

But ere the lark hath left the lea
 I wake, and I discern the truth;
 It is the trouble of my youth
 That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

LXIX

I dreamed there would be Spring no more,
 That Nature's ancient power was lost;
 The streets were black with smoke and
 frost,
 They chattered trifles at the door;

I wandered from the noisy town,
 I found a wood with thorny boughs;
 I took the thorns to bind my brows,
 I wore them like a civic crown;

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns
 From youth and babe and hoary hairs:
 They called me in the public squares
 The fool that wears a crown of thorns.

They called me fool, they called me child:
 I found an angel of the night;
 The voice was low, the look was bright;
 He looked upon my crown and smiled.

He reached the glory of a hand,
 That seemed to touch it into leaf;
 The voice was not the voice of grief,
 The words were hard to understand.

LXX

I cannot see the features right,
 When on the gloom I strive to paint
 The face I know; the hues are faint
 And mix with hollow masks of night.

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,
 A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
 A hand that points, and palléd shapes
 In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,
 And shoals of puckered faces drive;
 Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
 And lazy lengths on boundless shores;

Till all at once beyond the will
 I hear a wizard music roll,
 And through a lattice on the soul
 Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

LXXI

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance
 And madness, thou hast forged at last
 A night-long present of the past
 In which we went through summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?
 Then bring an opiate trebly strong,
 Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong,
 That so my pleasure may be whole;

While now we talk as once we talked
 Of men and minds, the dust of change,
 The days that grow to something strange,
 In walking as of old we walked

Beside the river's wooded reach,
 The fortress, and the mountain ridge,
 The cataract flashing from the bridge,
 The breaker breaking on the beach.

LXXII

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
 And howlest, issuing out of night,
 With blasts that blow the poplar white,
 And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crowned estate begun
 To pine in that reverse of doom,¹
 Which sickened every living bloom,
 And blurred the splendor of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
 With thy quick tears that make the rose
 Pull sideways, and the daisy close
 Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who mightst have heaved a windless flame
 Up the deep East, or, whispering, played
 A checker-work of beam and shade
 Along the hills, yet looked the same,

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;
 Day, marked as with some hideous crime,
 When the dark hand struck down through
 time,
 And canceled nature's best: but thou,

¹In Hallam's death.

Lift as thou mayst thy burthened brows
 Through clouds that drench the morning
 star,
 And whirl the ungarnered sheaf afar,
 And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound
 Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;
 Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
 And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

LXXIII

So many worlds, so much to do,
 So little done, such things to be,
 How know I what had need of thee,
 For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quenched that I foresaw,
 The head hath missed an earthly wreath:
 I curse not Nature, no, nor Death;
 For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod
 Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds.
 What fame is left for human deeds
 In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
 Fade wholly, while the soul exults,
 And self-infolds the large results
 Of force that would have forged a name.

LXXIV

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
 To those that watch it more and more,
 A likeness, hardly seen before,
 Comes out—to some one of his race;

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
 I see thee what thou art, and know
 Thy likeness to the wise below,
 Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
 And what I see I leave unsaid,
 Nor speak it, knowing Death has made
 His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXV

I leave thy praises unexpressed
 In verse that brings myself relief,
 And by the measure of my grief
 I leave thy greatness to be guessed.

What practice howsoe'er expert
 In fitting aptest words to things,
 Or voice the richest-toned that sings,
 Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days
 To raise a cry that lasts not long,
 And round thee with the breeze of song
 To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perished in the green,
 And, while we breathe beneath the sun,
 The world which credits what is done
 Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;
 But somewhere, out of human view,
 Whate'er thy hands are set to do
 Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

LXXVI

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
 And in a moment set thy face
 Where all the starry heavens of space
 •Are sharpened to a needle's end;¹

Take wings of foresight; lighten through
 The secular abyss² to come,
 And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
 Before the moldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke
 The darkness of our planet, last,
 Thine own shall wither in the vast,
 Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers
 With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain;
 And what are they when these remain
 The ruined shells of hollow towers?

LXXVII

What hope is here for modern rhyme
 To him who turns a musing eye
 On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie
 Foreshortened in the tract of time?

These mortal lullabies of pain
 May bind a book, may line a box,
 May serve to curl a maiden's locks;
 Or when a thousand moons shall wane

¹So distant in void space that all our firmament would appear to be a needle-point thence (Tennyson's note).

²The abyss of the ages.

A man upon a stall may find,
 And, passing, turn the page that tells
 A grief, then changed to something else,
 Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darkened ways
 Shall ring with music all the same;
 To breathe my loss is more than fame,
 To utter love more sweet than praise.

LXXVIII

Again at Christmas did we weave
 The holly round the Christmas hearth;
 The silent snow possessed the earth,
 And calmly fell our Christmas-eve.

The yule-clog³ sparkled keen with frost,
 No wing of wind the region swept,
 But over all things brooding slept
 The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
 Again our ancient games had place,
 The mimic picture's breathing grace,
 And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who showed a token of distress?
 No single tear, no mark of pain—
 O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?
 O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!
 No—mixed with all this mystic frame,
 Her deep relations are the same,
 But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXIX

"More than my brothers are to me,"—
 Let this not vex thee,⁴ noble heart!
 I know thee of what force thou art
 To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,
 As molded like in Nature's mint;
 And hill and wood and field did print
 The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curled
 Through all his eddying coves, the same
 All winds that roam the twilight came
 In whispers of the beauteous world.

³Log.

⁴Charles, Tennyson's brother. The line within quotation-marks is the last line of Section ix.

At one dear knee we proffered vows,
 One lesson from one book we learned,
 Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turned
 To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
 But he was rich where I was poor,
 And he supplied my want the more
 As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXX

If any vague desire should rise,
 That holy Death ere Arthur died
 Had moved me kindly from his side,
 And dropped the dust on tearless eyes;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
 The grief my loss in him had wrought,
 A grief as deep as life or thought,
 But stayed in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain;
 I hear the sentence that he speaks;
 He bears the burthen of the weeks,
 But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;
 And, influence-rich to soothe and save,
 Unused example from the grave
 Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXXI

Could I have said while he was here,
 "My love shall now no further range;
 There cannot come a mellower change,
 For now is love mature in ear"?

Love, then, had hope of richer store:
 What end is here to my complaint?
 This haunting whisper makes me faint,
 "More years had made me love thee more."

But Death returns an answer sweet:
 "My sudden frost was sudden gain,
 And gave all ripeness to the grain
 It might have drawn from after-heat."

LXXXII

I wage not any feud with Death
 For changes wrought on form and face;
 No lower life that earth's embrace
 May breed with him can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,
 From state to state the spirit walks;
 And these are but the shattered stalks,
 Or ruined chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
 The use of virtue out of earth;
 I know transplanted human worth
 Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
 The wrath that garners in my heart:
 He put our lives so far apart
 We cannot hear each other speak.

LXXXIII

Dip down upon the northern shore,
 O sweet new-year delaying long;
 Thou doest expectant Nature wrong;
 Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
 Thy sweetness from its proper place?
 Can trouble live with April days,
 Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
 The little speedwell's darling blue,
 Deep tulips dashed with fiery dew,
 Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
 Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
 That longs to burst a frozen bud
 And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXIV

When I contemplate all alone
 The life that had been thine below,
 And fix my thoughts on all the glow
 To which thy crescent would have grown,

I see thee sitting crowned with good,
 A central warmth diffusing bliss
 In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,
 On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;
 For now the day was drawing on,
 When thou shouldst link thy life with one
 Of mine own house,¹ and boys of thine

¹Emily, Tennyson's sister.

Had babbled "Uncle" on my knee;
 But that remorseless iron hour
 Made cypress of her orange flower,
 Despair of hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
 To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.
 I see their unborn faces shine
 Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honored guest,
 Thy partner in the flowery walk
 Of letters, genial table-talk,
 Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labor fills
 The lips of men with honest praise,
 And sun by sun the happy days
 Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;
 And all the train of bounteous hours
 Conduct, by paths of growing powers,
 To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
 Her lavish mission richly wrought,
 Leaving great legacies of thought,
 Thy spirit should fail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,
 As linked with thine in love and fate,
 And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait
 To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
 And He that died in Holy Land
 Would reach us out the shining hand,
 And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?
 Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake
 The old bitterness again, and break
 The low beginnings of content?

LXXXV¹

This truth came borne with bier and pall,
 I felt it, when I sorrowed most,
 'Tis better to have loved and lost,
 Than never to have loved at all—

¹This section is addressed to Edmund Lushington, whose marriage to Tennyson's sister Cecilia is celebrated in the Epilogue which concludes *In Memoriam*.

O true in word, and tried in deed,
 Demanding, so to bring relief
 To this which is our common grief,
 What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above
 Be dimmed of sorrow, or sustained;
 And whether love for him have drained
 My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws
 A faithful answer from the breast,
 Through light reproaches, half expressed,
 And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
 Till on mine ear this message falls,
 That in Vienna's fatal walls
 God's finger touched him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair
 That range above our mortal state,
 In circle round the blessed gate,
 Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him through the blissful climes,
 And showed him in the fountain fresh
 All knowledge that the sons of flesh
 Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remained, whose hopes were dim,
 Whose life, whose thoughts were little
 worth,
 To wander on a darkened earth,
 Where all things round me breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
 O heart, with kindest motion warm,
 O sacred essence, other form,
 O solemn ghost, O crownéd soul!

Yet none could better know than I,
 How much of act at human hands
 The sense of human will demands
 By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
 I felt and feel, though left alone,
 His being working in mine own,
 The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses decked
 With gifts of grace, that might express
 All-comprehensive tenderness,
 All-subtilizing intellect:

And so my passion hath not swerved
 To works of weakness, but I find
 An image comforting the mind,
 And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
 That loved to handle spiritual strife,
 Diffused the shock through all my life,
 But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
 For other friends that once I met;
 Nor can it suit me to forget
 The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love: I count it crime
 To mourn for any overmuch;
 I, the divided half of such
 A friendship as had mastered Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is
 Eternal, separate from fears.
 The all-assuming months and years
 Can take no part away from this;

But Summer on the steaming floods,
 And Spring that swells the narrow brooks,
 And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,
 That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
 Recalls, in change of light or gloom,
 My old affection of the tomb,
 And my prime passion in the grave.

My old affection of the tomb,
 A part of stillness, yearns to speak:
 "Arise, and get thee forth and seek
 A friendship for the years to come.

"I watch thee from the quiet shore;
 Thy spirit up to mine can reach;
 But in dear words of human speech
 We two communicate no more."

And I, "Can clouds of nature stain
 The starry clearness of the free?
 How is it? Canst thou feel for me
 Some painless sympathy with pain?"

And lightly does the whisper fall:
 "Tis hard for thee to fathom this;
 I triumph in conclusive bliss,
 And that serene result of all."

So hold I commerce with the dead;
 Or so methinks the dead would say;
 Or so shall grief with symbols play
 And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
 That these things pass, and I shall prove
 A meeting somewhere, love with love,
 I crave your pardon, O my friend;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
 I, clasping brother-hands, aver
 I could not, if I would, transfer
 The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart
 The promise of the golden hours?
 First love, first friendship, equal powers,
 That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
 That beats within a lonely place,
 That yet remembers his embrace,
 But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, though widowed, may not rest
 Quite in the love of what is gone,
 But seeks to beat in time with one
 That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
 Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
 The primrose of the later year,
 As not unlike to that of Spring.

LXXXVI

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
 That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
 Of evening over brake and bloom
 And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
 Through all the dewy tasseled wood,
 And shadowing down the hornéd flood
 In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
 The full new life that feeds thy breath
 Throughout my frame, till Doubt and
 Death,
 Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

¹Winding.

From belt to belt of crimson seas
 On leagues of odor streaming far,
 To where in yonder orient star
 A hundred spirits whisper "Peace."

LXXXVII

I passed beside the reverend walls
 In which of old I wore the gown;
 I roved at random through the town,
 And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes
 The storm their high-built organs make,
 And thunder-music, rolling, shake
 The prophet blazoned on the panes;

And caught once more the distant shout,
 The measured pulse of racing oars
 Among the willows; paced the shores
 And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt
 The same, but not the same; and last
 Up that long walk of limes I passed
 *To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door.
 I lingered; all within was noise
 Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys
 That crashed the glass and beat the floor;

Where once we held debate, a band
 Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
 And labor, and the changing mart,
 And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
 But send it slackly from the string;
 And one would pierce an outer ring,
 And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,
 Would cleave the mark. A willing ear
 We lent him. Who but hung to hear
 The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace
 And music in the bounds of law,
 To those conclusions when we saw
 The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
 In azure orbits heavenly-wise;

And over those ethereal eyes
 The bar of Michael Angelo?¹

LXXXVIII

Wild bird,² whose warble, liquid sweet,
 Rings Eden through the budded quicks,³
 O tell me where the senses mix,
 O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes employ
 Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
 And in the midmost heart of grief
 Thy passion clasps a secret joy;

And I—my harp would prelude woe,—
 I cannot all command the strings;
 The glory of the sum of things
 Will flash along the chords and go.

LXXXIX

Witch-elms that counterchange⁴ the floor
 Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright;
 And thou, with all thy breadth and height
 Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,
 My Arthur found your shadows fair,
 And shook to all the liberal air
 The dust and din and steam of town!

He brought an eye for all he saw;
 He mixed in all our simple sports;
 They pleased him, fresh from brawling
 courts
 And dusty purlicus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,
 Immantled in ambrosial dark,
 To drink the cooler air, and mark
 The landscape winking through the heat!

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
 The sweep of scythe in morning dew,
 The gust that round the garden flew,
 And tumbled half the mellowing pears!

¹These lines I wrote from what Arthur Hallam said after reading of the prominent ridge of bone over the eyes of Michael Angelo: "Alfred, look over my eyes; surely I have the bar of Michael Angelo!" (Tennyson.)

²Presumably the nightingale.

³Hedge-rows formed of living shrubs or small trees.

⁴Checker.

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
 About him, heart and ear were fed
 To hear him, as he lay and read
 The Tuscan poets on the lawn!

Or in the all-golden afternoon
 A guest, or happy sister, sung,
 Or here she brought the harp and flung
 A ballad to the brightening moon.

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
 Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
 And break the livelong summer day
 With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,
 Discussed the books to love or hate,
 Or touched the changes of the state,
 Or threaded some Socratic dream;

But if I praised the busy town,
 He loved to rail against it still,
 For "ground in yonder social mill
 We rub each other's angles down,

"And merge," he said, "in form and gloss
 The picturesque of man and man."
 We talked: the stream beneath us ran,
 The wine-flask lying couched in moss,

Or cooled within the glooming wave;
 And last, returning from afar,
 Before the crimson-circled star
 Had fallen into her father's grave,¹

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
 We heard behind the woodbine veil
 The milk that bubbled in the pail,
 And buzzings of the honeyed hours.

XC

He tasted love with half his mind,
 Nor ever drank the inviolate spring
 Where nighest heaven, who first could fling
 This bitter seed among mankind:

That could the dead, whose dying eyes
 Were closed with wail, resume their life,
 They would but find in child and wife
 An iron welcome when they rise.

¹Before Venus, the evening star, had dipped into the sunset. The planets, according to Laplace, were evolved from the sun (Tennyson).

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,
 To pledge them with a kindly tear,
 To talk them o'er, to wish them here,
 To count their memories half divine;

But if they came who passed away,
 Behold their brides in other hands;
 The hard heir strides about their lands,
 And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, though their sons were none of these,
 Not less the yet-loved sire would make
 Confusion worse than death, and shake
 The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah, dear, but come thou back to me!
 Whatever change the years have wrought,
 I find not yet one lonely thought
 That cries against my wish for thee.

XCI

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
 And rarely pipes the mounted thrush,
 Or underneath the barren bush
 Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;²

Come, wear the form by which I know
 Thy spirit in time among thy peers;
 The hope of unaccomplished years
 Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change
 May breathe, with many roses sweet,
 Upon the thousand waves of wheat
 That ripple round the lowly grange,

Come; not in watches of the night,
 But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,
 Come, beauteous in thine after form,
 And like a finer light in light.

XCII

If any vision should reveal
 Thy likeness, I might count it vain
 As but the canker of the brain;
 Yea, though it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast
 Together in the days behind,
 I might but say, I hear a wind
 Of memory murmuring the past.

²The kingfisher.

Yea, though it spake and bared to view
 A fact within the coming year;
 And though the months, revolving near,
 Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,
 But spiritual presentiments,
 And such refraction of events
 As often rises ere they rise.

XCIII

I shall not see thee. Dare I say
 No spirit ever brake the band
 That stays him from the native land
 Where first he walked when clasped in clay?

No visual shade of some one lost,
 But he, the Spirit himself, may come
 Where all the nerve of sense is numb,
 Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range
 With gods in unconjectured bliss,
 O, from the distance of the abyss
 Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
 The wish too strong for words to name,
 That in this blindness of the frame
 My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

XCIV

How pure at heart and sound in head,
 With what divine affections bold
 Should be the man whose thought would
 hold
 An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
 The spirits from their golden day,
 Except, like them, thou too canst say,
 My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
 Imaginations calm and fair,
 The memory like a cloudless air,
 The conscience as a sea at rest;

But when the heart is full of din,
 And doubt beside the portal waits,
 They can but listen at the gates,
 And hear the household jar within.

XCV

By night we lingered on the lawn,
 For underfoot the herb was dry;
 And genial warmth; and o'er the sky
 The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn
 Unwavering; not a cricket chirred;
 The brook alone far-off was heard,
 And on the board the fluttering urn.

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
 And wheeled or lit the filmy shapes
 That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes
 And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that pealed
 From knoll to knoll, where, couched at
 ease,
 The white kine glimmered, and the trees
 Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
 Withdrew themselves from me and night,
 And in the house light after light
 Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart; I read
 Of that glad year which once had been,
 In those fallen leaves which kept their
 green,
 The noble letters of the dead.

And strangely on the silence broke
 The silent-speaking words, and strange
 Was love's dumb cry defying change
 To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell
 On doubts that drive the coward back,
 And keen through wordy snares to track
 Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
 The dead man touched me from the past,
 And all at once it seemed at last
 The living soul was flashed on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirled
 About empyreal heights of thought,
 And came on that which is, and caught
 The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
 The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—
 The blows of Death. At length my trance
 Was canceled, stricken through with doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame
 In matter-molded forms of speech,
 Or even for intellect to reach
 Through memory that which I became;

Till now the doubtful dusk revealed
 The knolls once more where, couched at
 ease,
 The white kine glimmered, and the trees
 Laid their dark arms about the field;

And sucked from out the distant gloom
 A breeze began to tremble o'er
 The large leaves of the sycamore,
 And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering fresher overhead,
 Rocked the full-foliaged elms, and swung
 The heavy-folded rose, and flung
 The lilies to and fro, and said,

“The dawn, the dawn,” and died away;
 And East and West, without a breath,
 Mixed their dim lights, like life and death,
 To broaden into boundless day.

XCVI

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
 Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes
 Are tender over drowning flies,
 You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew
 In many a subtle question versed,
 Who touched a jarring lyre at first,
 But ever strove to make it true;

Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,
 At last he beat his music out.
 There lives more faith in honest doubt,
 Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gathered strength,
 He would not make his judgment blind,
 He faced the specters of the mind
 And laid them; thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own,
 And Power was with him in the night,

Which makes the darkness and the light,
 And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
 As over Sinai's peaks of old,
 While Israel made their gods of gold,
 Although the trumpet blew so loud.¹

XCVII

My love has talked with rocks and trees;
 He finds on misty mountain-ground
 His own vast shadow glory-crowned;
 He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life—
 I looked on these and thought of thee
 In vastness and in mystery,
 And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two—they dwelt with eye on eye,
 Their hearts of old have beat in tune,
 Their meetings made December June,
 Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never passed away;
 The days she never can forget
 Are earnest that he loves her yet,
 Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart;
 He loves her yet, she will not weep,
 Though rapt in matters dark and deep
 He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
 He reads the secret of the star,
 He seems so near and yet so far,
 He looks so cold: she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,
 A withered violet is her bliss;
 She knows not what his greatness is,
 For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings
 Of early faith and plighted vows;
 She knows but matters of the house,
 And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixed and cannot move,
 She darkly feels him great and wise,
 She dwells on him with faithful eyes,
 “I cannot understand; I love.”

¹See Exodus, xix and xxii.

XCVIII

You leave us:¹ you will see the Rhine,
And those fair hills I sailed below,
When I was there with him; and go
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,
That city. All her splendor seems
No livelier than the wisp that gleams
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
Enwind her isles, unmarked of me;
I have not seen, I will not see
Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
The birth, the bridal; friend from friend
Is oftener parted, fathers bend
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr² at the heels of men, and prey
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings
Her shadow on the blaze of kings.
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town
With statelier progress to and fro
The double tides of chariots flow
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content,
He told me, lives in any crowd,
When all is gay with lamps, and loud
With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain;
And wheels the circled dance, and breaks
The rocket molten into flakes
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

XCIX

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
So loud with voices of the birds,
So thick with lowings of the herds,
Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest through thy darkling red
On yon swollen brook that bubbles fast
By meadows breathing of the past,
And woodlands holy to the dead;

¹Charles Tennyson and his bride, who on their marriage-tour visited Vienna.

²Snarl.

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
A song that slights the coming care,
And Autumn laying here and there
A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath
To myriads on the genial earth,
Memories of bridal, or of birth,
And unto myriads more, of death.

O, wheresoever those may be,
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
To-day they count as kindred souls;
They know me not, but mourn with me.

C³

I climb the hill: from end to end
Of all the landscape underneath,
I find no place that does not breathe
Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
Or low morass and whispering reed,
Or simple stile from mead to mead,
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
That hears the latest linnet trill,
Nor quarry trenched along the hill
And haunted by the wrangling daw;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
To left and right through meadowy curves,
That feed the mothers of the flock;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
And each reflects a kindlier day;
And, leaving these, to pass away,
I think once more he seems to die.

CI

Unwatched, the garden bough shall sway,
The tender blossom flutter down,
Unloved, that beech will gather brown,
This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sunflower, shining fair,
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,
And many a rose-carnation feed
With summer spice the humming air;

³This and the two following sections were occasioned by the removal of the Tennysons from Somersby.

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
The brook shall babble down the plain,
At noon or when the Lesser Wain
Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
And flood the haunts of hern and crake,
Or into silver arrows break
The sailing moon in creek and cove;

Till from the garden and the wild
A fresh association blow,
And year by year the landscape grow
Familiar to the stranger's child;

As year by year the laborer tills
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades,
And year by year our memory fades
From all the circle of the hills.

CII

We leave the well-belovéd place
Where first we gazed upon the sky;
The roofs that heard our earliest cry
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,
As down the garden-walks I move,
Two spirits of a diverse love
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, "Here thy boyhood sung
Long since its matin song, and heard
The low love-language of the bird
In native hazels tassel-hung."

The other answers, "Yea, but here
Thy feet have strayed in after hours
With thy lost friend among the bowers,
And this hath made them trebly dear."

These two have striven half the day,
And each prefers his separate claim,
Poor rivals in a losing game,
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go; my feet are set
To leave the pleasant fields and farms;
They¹ mix in one another's arms
To one pure image of regret.

CIII

On that last night before we went
From out the doors where I was bred,

¹The rivals of the preceding stanza.

I dreamed a vision of the dead,
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
And maidens² with me; distant hills
From hidden summits fed with rills
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
They sang of what is wise and good
And graceful. In the center stood
A statue veiled, to which they sang;

And which, though veiled, was known to me,
The shape of him I loved, and love
For ever. Then flew in a dove
And brought a summons from the sea;³

And when they learned that I must go,
They wept and wailed, but led the way
To where a little shallop lay
At anchor in the flood below;

And on by many a level mead,
And shadowing bluff that made the banks,
We glided winding under ranks
Of iris and the golden reed;

And still as vaster grew the shore⁴
And rolled the floods in grander space,
The maidens gathered strength and grace
And presence, lordlier than before;

And I myself, who sat apart
And watched them, waxed in every limb;
I felt the thews of Anakim,⁵
The pulses of a Titan's heart;

As one would sing the death of war,
And one would chant the history
Of that great race which is to be,
And one the shaping of a star;⁶

¹They are the muses, poetry, arts—all that made life beautiful here, which we hope will pass with us beyond the grave (Tennyson). Tennyson also stated that the "hidden summits" of the following line and the "river" of the last line of the stanza mean, respectively "the divine" and "life."

²Eternity (Tennyson).

³The progress of the Age (Tennyson).

⁴Giants (see Deuteronomy, ix, 2).

⁵The great hopes of humanity and science (Tennyson).

Until the forward-creeping tides
 Began to foam, and we to draw
 From deep to deep, to where we saw
 A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,
 But thrice as large as man he bent
 To greet us. Up the side I went,
 And fell in silence on his neck;

Whereat those maidens with one mind
 Bewailed their lot; I did them wrong:
 "We served thee here," they said, "so
 long,
 And wilt thou leave us now behind?"

So rapt I was, they could not win
 An answer from my lips, but he
 Replying, "Enter likewise ye
 And go with us:" they entered in.

And while the wind began to sweep
 A music out of sheet and shroud,
 We steered her toward a crimson cloud
 That landlike slept along the deep.

CIV

The time draws near the birth of Christ;
 The moon is hid, the night is still;
 A single church below the hill
 Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
 That wakens at this hour of rest
 A single murmur in the breast,
 That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
 In lands where not a memory strays,
 Nor landmark breathes of other days,
 But all is new unhallowed ground.

CV

To-night ungathered let us leave
 This laurel, let this holly stand:
 We live within the stranger's land,
 And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone
 And silent under other snows:
 There in due time the woodbine blows,
 The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
 The genial hour with mask and mime;
 For change of place, like growth of time,
 Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
 By which our lives are chiefly proved,
 A little spare the night I loved,
 And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
 Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;
 For who would keep an ancient form
 Through which the spirit breathes no more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;
 Nor harp be touched, nor flute be blown;
 No dance, no motion, save alone
 What lightens in the lucid East

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
 Long sleeps the summer in the seed;
 Run out your measured arcs, and lead
 The closing cycle rich in good.

CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
 The flying cloud, the frosty light:
 The year is dying in the night;
 Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
 Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
 The year is going, let him go;
 Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
 For those that here we see no more;
 Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
 Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
 And ancient forms of party strife;
 Ring in the nobler modes of life,
 With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
 The faithless coldness of the times;
 Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
 But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
 The civic slander and the spite;
 Ring in the love of truth and right,
 Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
 Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
 Ring out the thousand wars of old,
 Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
 The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
 Ring out the darkness of the land,
 Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CVII

It is the day when he was born,¹
 A bitter day that early sank
 Behind a purple-frosty bank
 Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
 To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies
 The blast of North and East, and ice
 Makes daggers at the sharpened eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
 To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
 Above the wood which grides and clangs
 Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
 To darken on the rolling brine
 That breaks the coast. But fetch the
 wine,

Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
 To make a solid core of heat;
 Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
 Of all things even as he were by;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
 With books and music, surely we
 Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
 And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVIII

I will not shut me from my kind,
 And, lest I stiffen into stone,
 I will not eat my heart alone,
 Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,
 And vacant yearning, though with might
 To scale the heaven's highest height,
 Or dive below the wells of death?

What find I in the highest place,
 But mine own phantom chanting hymns?
 And on the depths of death there swims
 The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
 Of sorrow under human skies:
 'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,
 Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CIX

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
 From household fountains never dry;
 The critic clearness of an eye
 That saw through all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force
 To seize and throw the doubts of man;
 Impassioned logic, which outran
 The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,
 But touched with no ascetic gloom;
 And passion pure in snowy bloom
 Through all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
 Of freedom in her regal seat
 Of England; not the schoolboy heat,
 The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace
 In such a sort, the child would twine
 A trustful hand, unasked, in thine,
 And find his comfort in thy face;

All these have been and thee mine eyes
 Have looked on: if they looked in vain,
 My shame is greater who remain,
 Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CX

Thy converse drew us with delight,
 The men of rathe² and riper years;
 The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
 Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
 The proud was half disarmed of pride,
 Nor cared the serpent at thy side³
 To flicker with his double tongue.

²Early.

³The envious and venomous slanderer.

¹February.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,
 The flippant put himself to school
 And heard thee, and the brazen fool
 Was softened, and he knew not why;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,
 And felt thy triumph was as mine;
 And loved them more, that they were
 thine,
 The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,
 But mine the love that will not tire,
 And, born of love, the vague desire
 That spurs an imitative will.

CXI

The churl in spirit, up or down
 Along the scale of ranks, through all,
 To him who grasps a golden ball,
 By blood a king, at heart a clown,—

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
 His want in forms for fashion's sake,
 Will let his coltish nature break
 At seasons through the gilded pale;

For who can always act? but he,
 To whom a thousand memories call,
 Not being less but more than all
 The gentleness he seemed to be,

Best seemed the thing he was, and joined
 Each office of the social hour
 To noble manners, as the flower
 And native growth of noble mind;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
 Or villain fancy fleeting by,
 Drew in the expression of an eye
 Where God and Nature met in light;

And thus he bore without abuse
 The grand old name of gentleman,
 Defamed by every charlatan,
 And soiled with all ignoble use.

CXII

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,
 That I, who gaze with temperate eyes
 On glorious insufficiencies,
 Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room
 Of all my love, art reason why

I seem to cast a careless eye
 On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power
 Sprang up for ever at a touch,
 And hope could never hope too much,
 In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,
 And tracts of calm from tempest made,
 And world-wide fluctuation swayed
 In vassal tides that followed thought.

CXIII

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise;
 Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee
 Which not alone had guided me,
 But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen
 In intellect, with force and skill
 To strive, to fashion, to fulfill—
 I doubt not what thou wouldst have been:

A life in civic action warm,
 A soul on highest mission sent,
 A potent voice of Parliament,
 A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,
 Becoming, when the time has birth,
 A lever to uplift the earth
 And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,
 With agonies, with energies,
 With overthrowings, and with cries,
 And undulations to and fro.

CXIV

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail
 Against her beauty? May she mix
 With men and prosper! Who shall fix
 Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire;
 She sets her forward countenance
 And leaps into the future chance,
 Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—
 She cannot fight the fear of death.
 What is she, cut from love and faith,
 But some wild Pallas¹ from the brain

¹Pallas Athena sprang full-grown and full-armed
 from the head of Zeus.

Of demons? fiery-hot to burst
 All barriers in her onward race
 For power. Let her know her place;
 She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
 If all be not in vain, and guide
 Her footsteps, moving side by side
 With Wisdom, like the younger child;

For she is earthly of the mind,
 But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
 O friend, who camest to thy goal
 So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,
 Who grewest not alone in power
 And knowledge, but by year and hour
 In reverence and in charity.

CXV

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
 Now burgeons every maze of quick¹
 About the flowering squares,² and thick
 By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
 The distance takes a lovelier hue,
 And drowned in yonder living blue
 The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
 The flocks are whiter down the vale,
 And milkier every milky sail
 On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
 In yonder greening gleam, and fly
 The happy birds, that change their sky
 To build and brood, that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast
 Spring wakens too, and my regret
 Becomes an April violet,
 And buds and blossoms like the rest.

CXVI

Is it, then, regret for buried time
 That keenlier in sweet April wakes,
 And meets the year, and gives and takes
 The colors of the crescent prime?³

¹Hedge.²Fields.³Spring

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,
 The life re-orient out of dust,
 Cry through the sense to hearten trust
 In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine
 Upon me, while I muse alone,
 And that dear voice, I once have known,
 Still speak to me of me and mine.

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
 For days of happy commune dead,
 Less yearning for the friendship fled
 Than some strong bond which is to be.

CXVII

O days and hours, your work is this,
 To hold me from my proper place,
 A little while from his embrace,
 For fuller gain of after bliss;

That out of distance might ensue
 Desire of nearness doubly sweet,
 And unto meeting, when we meet,
 Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,⁴
 And every span of shade that steals,
 And every kiss of toothéd wheels,⁵
 And all the courses of the suns.

CXVIII

Contemplate all this work of Time,
 The giant laboring in his youth;
 Nor dream of human love and truth,
 As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead
 Are breathers of an ampler day
 For ever nobler ends. They say,
 The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
 And grew to seeming-random forms,
 The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
 Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branched from clime to
 clime,
 The herald of a higher race,
 And of himself in higher place,
 If so he type this work of time

⁴In allusion to the hour-glass.⁵The wheels of a clock.

Within himself, from more to more;
Or, crowned with attributes of woe
Like glories, move his course, and show
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

CXXIX

Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, not as one that weeps
I come once more; the city sleeps;
I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see
Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn
A light-blue lane of early dawn,
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
And bright the friendship of thine eye;
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh
I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXX

I trust I have not wasted breath:
I think we are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts,¹ I fought with Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:
Let Science prove we are, and then
What matters Science unto men,
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood shape
His action like the greater ape,
But I was *born* to other things.

CXXI

Sad Hesper² o'er the buried sun
And ready, thou, to die with him,
Thou watchest all things ever dim
And dimmer, and a glory done.

¹ 1 Corinthians, xv, 32.

² Hesper, the evening star, which follows the setting sun and watches the fading light and ending life of

The team is loosened from the wain,
The boat is drawn upon the shore;
Thou listenest to the closing door,
And life is darkened in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
By thee the world's great work is heard
Beginning, and the wakeful bird;
Behind thee comes the greater light.

The market boat is on the stream,
And voices hail it from the brink;
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
For what is one, the first, the last,
Thou, like my present and my past,
Thy place is changed; thou art the same.

CXXII

O, wast thou with me, dearest, then,
While I rose up against my doom,
And yearned to burst the folded gloom,
To bare the eternal heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
The strong imagination roll
A sphere of stars about my soul,
In all her motion one with law?

If thou wert with me, and the grave
Divide us not, be with me now,
And enter in at breast and brow,
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quickened with a livelier breath,
And like an inconsiderate boy,
As in the former flash of joy,
I slip the thoughts of life and death;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
And every dewdrop paints a bow,³
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
And every thought breaks out a rose.

day, is also Phosphor, the morning star, which precedes the sun and sees the dawn of light and life. They are the same "planet of Love" (*Maud*), which does but change its place. And so the poet's past and present are in substance one thing (Love), which has merely changed its place in becoming present instead of past (A. C. Bradley).

³ Rainbow.

CXXIII

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
 O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
 There where the long street roars hath been
 The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
 From form to form, and nothing stands;
 They melt like mist, the solid lands,
 Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
 And dream my dream, and hold it true;
 For though my lips may breathe adieu,
 I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIV

That which we dare invoke to bless;
 Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;
 He, They, One, All; within, without;¹
 The Power in darkness, whom we guess,—

I found Him not in world or sun,
 Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye,
 Nor through the questions men may try,
 The petty cobwebs we have spun.

If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,
 I heard a voice, "believe no more,"
 And heard an ever-breaking shore
 That tumbled in the Godless deep,

A warmth within the breast would melt
 The freezing reason's colder part,
 And like a man in wrath the heart
 Stood up and answered, "I have felt."

No, like a child in doubt and fear:
 But that blind clamor made me wise;
 Then was I as a child that cries,
 But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am beheld again
 What is, and no man understands;
 And out of darkness came the hands
 That reach through nature, molding men.

CXXV

Whatever I have said or sung,
 Some bitter notes my harp would give,
 Yea, though there often seemed to live
 A contradiction on the tongue,

¹The Deity, however imagined to exist, whether as conceived by the theist, the polytheist, the monist, or the pantheist, or as inside us or outside us.

Yet Hope had never lost her youth,
 She did but look through dimmer eyes;
 Or Love but played with gracious lies,
 Because he felt so fixed in truth;

And if the song were full of care,
 He breathed the spirit of the song;
 And if the words were sweet and strong
 He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail
 To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
 And this electric force, that keeps
 A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXXVI

Love is and was my lord and king,
 And in his presence I attend
 To hear the tidings of my friend,
 Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my king and lord,
 And will be, though as yet I keep
 Within the court on earth, and sleep
 Encompassed by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
 Who moves about from place to place,
 And whispers to the worlds of space,
 In the deep night, that all is well.

CXXVII

And all is well, though faith and form
 Be sundered in the night of fear;
 Well roars the storm to those that hear
 A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
 And justice, even though thrice again
 The red fool-fury of the Seine²
 Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
 And him, the lazar, in his rags!
 They tremble, the sustaining crags;
 The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;
 The fortress crashes from on high,
 The brute earth lightens to the sky,
 And the great Æon³ sinks in blood,

²The violent revolutions in France.

³The modern age.

And compassed by the fires of hell;
 While thou, dear spirit, happy star,
 O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
 And smilest, knowing all is well.

CXXVIII

The love that rose on stronger wings,
 Unpalsied when he met with Death,
 Is comrade of the lesser faith
 That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood
 Of onward time shall yet be made,
 And thronéd races may degrade;¹
 Yet, O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,
 If all your office had to do
 With old results that look like new—
 If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
 To fool the crowd with glorious lies,
 To cleave a creed in sects and cries,
 To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
 To cramp the student at his desk,
 To make old bareness picturesque
 And tuft with grass a feudal tower,

Why, then my scorn might well descend
 On you and yours. I see in part
 That all, as in some piece of art,
 Is toil coöperant to an end.

CXXIX

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
 So far, so near in woe and weal,
 O loved the most, when most I feel
 There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown, human, divine;
 Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
 Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,
 Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
 Loved deeper, darker understood;
 Behold, I dream a dream of good,
 And mingle all the world with thee.

¹And races now highest may degenerate.

CXXX

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
 I hear thee where the waters run;
 Thou standest in the rising sun,
 And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;
 But though I seem in star and flower
 To feel thee some diffusive power,
 I do not therefore love thee less.

My love involves the love before;
 My love is vaster passion now;
 Though mix'd with God and Nature thou,
 I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
 I have thee still, and I rejoice;
 I prosper, circled with thy voice;
 I shall not lose thee though I die.

CXXXI

O living will that shalt endure
 When all that seems shall suffer shock,
 Rise in the spiritual rock,²
 Flow through our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
 A voice as unto him that hears,
 A cry above the conquered years
 To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
 The truths that never can be proved
 Until we close with all we loved,
 And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long,³
 Demand not thou a marriage lay;
 In that it is thy marriage day
 Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
 Since first he told me that he loved
 A daughter of our house, nor proved
 Since that dark day a day like this;

² 1 Corinthians, x, 4.

³This Epilogue is an epithalamium written to celebrate the marriage of Edmund Lushington to Tennyson's sister Cecilia in 1842. Tennyson said of *In Memoriam*: "It begins with a funeral and ends with a marriage—begins with death and ends in promise of a new life—a sort of *Divine Comedy*, cheerful at the close."

Though I since then have numbered o'er
 Some thrice three years;¹ they went and
 came,
 Remade the blood and changed the frame,
 And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm
 In dying songs a dead regret,
 But like a statue solid-set,
 And molded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
 Than in the summers that are flown,
 For I myself with these have grown
 To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I made
 As echoes out of weaker times,
 As half but idle brawling rhymes,
 The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
 That must be made a wife ere noon?
 She enters, glowing like the moon
 Of Eden on its bridal bower.

On me she bends her blissful eyes
 And then on thee; they meet thy look
 And brighten like the star that shook
 Betwixt the palms of Paradise.

O, when her life was yet in bud,
 He² too foretold the perfect rose.
 For thee she grew, for thee she grows
 For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy, full of power;
 As gentle; liberal-minded, great,
 Consistent; wearing all that weight
 Of learning lightly like a flower.³

But now set out: the noon is near,
 And I must give away the bride;
 She fears not, or with thee beside
 And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,
 That watched her on her nurse's arm,
 That shielded all her life from harm,
 At last must part with her to thee;

¹In making this statement Tennyson violates the internal chronology of the poem elsewhere maintained.

²Hallam.

³Lushington was a classical scholar, who became Professor of Greek at Glasgow.

Now waiting to be made a wife,
 Her feet, my darling, on the dead;
 Their pensive tablets round her head,
 And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
 The "Wilt thou?" answered, and again
 The "Wilt thou?" asked, till out of twain
 Her sweet "I will" has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,
 Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
 By village eyes as yet unborn.
 The names are signed, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
 The joy to every wandering breeze;
 The blind wall rocks, and on the trees
 The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours
 Await them. Many a merry face
 Salutes them—maidens of the place,
 That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride
 With him to whom her hand I gave.
 They leave the porch, they pass the grave
 That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
 For them the light of life increased,
 Who stay to share the morning feast,
 Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
 To meet and greet a whiter sun;
 My drooping memory will not shun
 The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
 And hearts are warmed and faces bloom,
 As drinking health to bride and groom
 We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
 Conjecture of a stiller guest,
 Perchance, perchance, among the rest,
 And, though in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,
 And those white-favored horses wait;
 They rise, but linger; it is late;
 Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
 From little cloudlets on the grass,
 But sweeps away as out we pass
 To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
 And talk of others that are wed,
 And how she looked, and what he said,
 And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
 The shade of passing thought, the wealth
 Of words and wit, the double health,
 The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance;—till I retire.
 Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,
 And high in heaven the streaming cloud,
 And on the downs a rising fire:

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
 Till over down and over dale
 All night the shining vapor sail
 And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,
 And catch at every mountain head,
 And o'er the friths that branch and spread
 Their sleeping silver through the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,
 With tender gloom the roof, the wall;
 And breaking let the splendor fall
 To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
 And, star and system rolling past,
 A soul shall draw from out the vast
 And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved through life of lower phase,
 Result in man, be born and think,
 And act and love, a closer link
 Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
 On knowledge; under whose command
 Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
 Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,
 For all we thought and loved and did,
 And hoped, and suffered, is but seed
 Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man that with me trod
 This planet was a noble type
 Appearing ere the times were ripe,
 That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,
 One God, one law, one element,
 And one far-off divine event,
 To which the whole creation moves.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON¹

I

BURY the Great Duke
 With an empire's lamentation,
 Let us bury the Great Duke
 To the noise of the mourning of a mighty
 nation,
 Mourning when their leaders fall,
 Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
 And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

II

Where shall we lay the man whom we de-
 plore?
 Here, in streaming London's central roar.²
 Let the sound of those he wrought for,
 And the feet of those he fought for,
 Echo round his bones for evermore.

III

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
 As fits an universal woe,
 Let the long long procession go,
 And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
 And let the mournful martial music blow;
 The last great Englishman is low.

IV

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
 Remembering all his greatness in the Past.
 No more in soldier fashion will he greet
 With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
 O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute:³
 Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,

¹Published on 18 November, 1852, the day of the Duke of Wellington's funeral. He died on 14 September.

²The Duke was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral.

³Wellington was much in the service of the state in the years following Waterloo, and from the autumn of 1828 until the autumn of 1830 he was Prime Minister.

The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
 Whole in himself, a common good.
 Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
 Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
 Our greatest yet with least pretense,
 Great in council and great in war,
 Foremost captain of his time,
 Rich in saving common-sense,
 And, as the greatest only are,
 In his simplicity sublime.
 O good gray head which all men knew,
 O voice from which their omens all men
 drew,
 O iron nerve to true occasion true,
 O fall'n at length that tower of strength
 Which stood four-square to all the winds
 that blew!
 Such was he whom we deplore.
 The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
 The great World-victor's victor¹ will be
 seen no more.

v

All is over and done:
 Render thanks to the Giver,
 England, for thy son.
 Let the bell² be tolled.
 Render thanks to the Giver,
 And render him to the mold.
 Under the cross of gold
 That shines over city and river,
 There he shall rest for ever
 Among the wise and the bold.
 Let the bell be tolled:
 And a reverent people behold
 The towering car, the sable steeds:
 Bright let it be with its blazoned deeds,
 Dark in its funeral fold.
 Let the bell be tolled:
 And a deeper knell in the heart be knolled;
 And the sound of the sorrowing anthem
 rolled
 Through the dome of the golden cross;
 And the volleying cannon thunder his loss;
 He knew their voices of old.
 For many a time in many a clime
 His captain's-ear has heard them boom
 Bellowing victory, bellowing doom:

I.e., the conqueror of Napoleon.

²The Great Bell of St. Paul's, customarily tolled only at the death of members of the royal family, the bishop of London, the dean of the Cathedral, and the lord-mayor of London, was also tolled for Wellington.

When he with those deep voices wrought,
 Guarding realms and kings from shame;
 With those deep voices our dead captain
 taught

The tyrant,³ and asserts his claim
 In that dread sound to the great name,
 Which he has worn so pure of blame,
 In praise and in dispraise the same,⁴
 A man of well-tempered frame.
 O civic muse, to such a name,
 To such a name for ages long,
 To such a name,
 Preserve a broad approach of fame,
 And ever-echoing avenues of song.

vi

Who is he that cometh, like an honored
 guest,
 With banner and with music, with soldier
 and with priest,
 With a nation weeping, and breaking on my
 rest?⁵

Mighty Seaman, this is he
 Was great by land as thou by sea.
 Thine island loves thee well, thou famous
 man,
 The greatest sailor since our world began.
 Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
 To thee the greatest soldier comes;
 For this is he
 Was great by land as thou by sea;
 His foes were thine;⁶ he kept us free;
 O give him welcome, this is he
 Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
 And worthy to be laid by thee;
 For this is England's greatest son,
 He that gained a hundred fights,
 Nor ever lost an English gun;⁷
 This is he that far away
 Against the myriads of Assaye⁸
 Clashed with his fiery few and won;
 And underneath another sun,

³Napoleon.

⁴In 1830 Wellington became the object of popular attack because of his opposition to Parliamentary reform.

⁵The question is asked by Nelson, beside whose remains Wellington was buried in St. Paul's.

⁶Nelson fought Napoleon and the French by sea as Wellington did by land.

⁷In twenty years of fighting Wellington never lost a battle, though he did lose two guns at Maya in 1813.

⁸In India, where Wellington defeated a Mahratta army ten times as large as his own.

Warring on a later day,
 Round affrighted Lisbon drew
 The treble works,¹ the vast designs
 Of his labored rampart-lines,
 Where he greatly stood at bay,
 Whence he issued forth anew,
 And ever great and greater grew,
 Beating from the wasted vines
 Back to France her banded swarms,
 Back to France with countless blows,
 Till o'er the hills her eagles² flew
 Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
 Followed up in valley and glen
 With blare of bugle, clamor of men,
 Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
 And England pouring on her foes.
 Such a war had such a close.
 'Again their ravening eagle rose
 In anger,³ wheeled on Europe-shadowing
 wings,
 And barking for the thrones of kings;
 Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
 On that loud sabbath⁴ shook the spoiler
 down;
 A day of onsets of despair!
 Dashed on every rocky square
 Their surging charges foamed themselves
 away;
 Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;
 Through the long-tormented air
 Heaven flashed a sudden jubilant ray,
 And down we swept and charged and over-
 threw.
 So great a soldier taught us there
 What long-enduring hearts could do
 On that world-earthquake, Waterloo!
 Mighty Seaman, tender and true,
 And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
 O savior of the silver-coasted isle,
 O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
 If aught of things that here befall
 Touch a spirit among things divine,
 If love of country move thee there at all,
 Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine!
 And through the centuries let a people's voice
 In full acclaim,
 A people's voice,

The proof and echo of all human fame,
 A people's voice, when they rejoice
 At civic revel and pomp and game,
 Attest their great commander's claim
 With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
 Eternal honor to his name.

VII

A people's voice! we are a people yet.
 Though all men else their nobler dreams for-
 get,
 Confused by brainless mobs and lawless
 Powers;⁵
 Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly
 set
 His Briton in blown seas and storming
 showers,
 We have a voice, with which to pay the debt
 Of boundless love and reverence and regret
 To those great men who fought, and kept it
 ours.
 And keep it ours, O God, from brute control;
 O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the
 soul
 Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
 And save the one true seed of freedom sown
 Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
 That sober freedom out of which there
 springs
 Our loyal passion for our temperate kings;
 For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
 Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
 And drill the raw world for the march of
 mind,
 Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be
 just.
 But wink no more in slothful overtrust.⁶
 Remember him who led your hosts;
 He bade you guard the sacred coasts.
 Your cannons molder on the seaward wall;
 His voice is silent in your council-hall
 For ever; and whatever tempests lour
 For ever silent; even if they broke
 In thunder, silent; yet remember all
 He spoke among you, and the Man who
 spoke;

¹The lines of Torres Vedras, which enclosed the Peninsula on which Lisbon stands.

²The eagle was the ensign of the French regiments under the Empire.

³After Napoleon's escape from Elba.

⁴The Battle of Waterloo was fought on Sunday, 18 June, 1815.

⁵The allusion is to the French Revolution of 1848, which was followed by political disturbances in many other European countries, and to the *coup d'état* of 1851 which placed Napoleon III on the French throne.

⁶The allusion is to a measure for the organization of the militia, prompted by fear of Napoleon III, which the House of Commons rejected in February, 1852. Tennyson strongly felt that it should have been passed.

Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor paltered with Eternal God for power;
Who let the turbid streams of rumor flow
Through either babbling world of high and
low;

Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life;
Who never spoke against a foe;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on the
right:

Truth-teller was our England's Alfred
named;

Truth-lover was our English Duke;
Whatever record leap to light
He never shall be shamed.

VIII

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Followed by the brave of other lands,¹
He, on whom from both her open hands
Lavish Honor showered all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.²
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great,
But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory:
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outredden
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory:
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Through the long gorge to the far light has
won

His path upward, and prevailed,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and
sun.

Such was he: his work is done.

¹Representatives of all the chief European powers except Austria were at the funeral.

²Wellington had not only the star of the Garter and the stars of many other orders, British and foreign, but was made successively baron, viscount, earl, marquis, and duke. He was also voted £500,000 by the House of Commons.

But while the races of mankind endure,
Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman
pure:

Till in all lands and through all human
story

The path of duty be the way to glory:
And let the land whose hearths he saved from
shame

For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illuminated cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name.

IX

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet unmolded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not see:
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung:
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one, upon whose hand and heart and
brain

Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
Ours the pain, be his the gain!
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere;
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane:
We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.
For though the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will;
Though world on world in myriad myriads
roll

Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul?

On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush, the Dead March¹ wails in the people's
ears:

The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs
and tears:

The black earth yawns: the mortal disap-
pears;

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;

He is gone who seemed so great. —

Gone; but nothing can bereave him

Of the force he made his own

Being here, and we believe him

Something far advanced in State,

And that he wears a truer crown

Than any wreath that man can weave him.

Speak no more of his renown,

Lay your earthly fancies down,

And in the vast cathedral leave him.

God accept him, Christ receive him.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE²

I

HALF a league, half a league,

Half a league onward,

All in the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred.

"Forward the Light Brigade!

Charge for the guns!" he said.

Into the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred.

II

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"

Was there a man dismayed?

Not though the soldier knew

Some one had blundered.

Theirs not to make reply,

Theirs not to reason why,

Theirs but to do and die.

Into the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred.

III

Cannon to right of them,

Cannon to left of them,

Cannon in front of them

Volleyed and thundered;

Stormed at with shot and shell,

Boldly they rode and well,

Into the jaws of Death,

Into the mouth of hell

Rode the six hundred.

IV

Flashed all their sabers bare,

Flashed as they turned in air

Sab'ring the gunners there,

Charging an army, while

All the world wondered.

Plunged in the battery-smoke

Right through the line they broke;

Cossack and Russian

Reeled from the saber-stroke

Shattered and sundered.

Then they rode back, but not,

Not the six hundred.

V

Cannon to right of them,

Cannon to left of them,

Cannon behind them

Volleyed and thundered;

Stormed at with shot and shell,

While horse and hero fell,

They that had fought so well

Came through the jaws of Death,

Back from the mouth of hell,

All that was left of them,

Left of six hundred.

VI

When can their glory fade?

O the wild charge they made!

All the world wondered.

Honor the charge they made!

Honor the Light Brigade,

Noble six hundred!

COME INTO THE GARDEN³

I

COME into the garden, Maud,

For the black bat, night, has flown,

Come into the garden, Maud,

I am here at the gate alone;

And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,

And the musk of the rose is blown.

³From *Maud*, published in 1855.

¹The Dead March in Handel's *Saul* was played by bands as the funeral procession passed through the streets.

²Published in December, 1854. The charge occurred in the Battle of Balaclava, 1854, an engagement of the Crimean War.

II

For a breeze of morning moves,
 And the planet of Love is on high,
 Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
 On a bed of daffodil sky,
 To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
 To faint in his light, and to die.

III

All night have the roses heard
 The flute, violin, bassoon;
 All night has the casement jessamine stirred
 To the dancers dancing in tune;
 Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
 And a hush with the setting moon.

IV

I said to the lily, "There is but one,
 With whom she has heart to be gay.
 When will the dancers leave her alone?
 She is weary of dance and play."
 Now half to the setting moon are gone,
 And half to the rising day;
 Low on the sand and loud on the stone
 The last wheel echoes away.

V

I said to the rose, "The brief night goes
 In babble and revel and wine.
 O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
 For one that will never be thine?
 But mine, but mine," so I sware to the rose,
 "For ever and ever, mine."

VI

And the soul of the rose went into my blood
 As the music clashed in the hall;
 And long by the garden lake I stood,
 For I heard your rivulet fall
 From the lake to the meadow and on to the
 wood,
 Our wood, that is dearer than all;

VII

From the meadow your walks have left so
 sweet
 That whenever a March-wind sighs
 He sets the jewel-print of your feet
 In violets blue as your eyes,
 To the woody hollows in which we meet
 And the valleys of Paradise.

VIII

The slender acacia would not shake
 One long milkbloom on the tree;
 The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
 As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
 But the rose was awake all night for your
 sake,
 Knowing your promise to me;
 The lilies and roses were all awake,
 They sighed for the dawn and thee.

IX

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
 Come hither, the dances are done,
 In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
 Queen lily and rose in one,
 Shine out, little head, sunning over with
 curls,
 To the flowers, and be their sun.

X

There has fallen a splendid tear
 From the passion-flower at the gate.
 She is coming, my dove, my dear;
 She is coming, my life, my fate.
 The red rose cries, "She is near, she is
 near";
 And the white rose weeps, "She is late";
 The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear";
 And the lily whispers, "I wait."

XI

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
 Were it ever so airy a tread,
 My heart would hear her and beat,
 Were it earth in an earthy bed;
 My dust would hear her and beat,
 Had I lain for a century dead,
 Would start and tremble under her feet,
 And blossom in purple and red.

MILTON¹

(ALCAICS)

O MIGHTY-MOUTHED inventor of harmonies,
 O skilled to sing of Time or Eternity,
 God-gifted organ-voice of England,
 Milton, a name to resound for ages;
 Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
 Starred from Jehovah's gorgeous armories,
 Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean

¹Published in December, 1863. One of several attempts made by Tennyson to reproduce in English the effect of classical meters.

Rings to the roar of an angel onset!
 Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
 The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,
 And bloom profuse and cedar arches
 Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,
 Where some refulgent sunset of India
 Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,
 And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods
 Whisper in odorous heights of even.

NORTHERN FARMER, OLD STYLE¹

I

WHEER 'asta beän saw long and meä liggin'²
 'ere aloän?
 Noorse? thoort nowt o' a noorse; whoy,
 Doctor's abeän an' agoän;
 Says that I moänt 'a naw moor aäle, but I
 beänt a fool;
 Git ma my aäle, fur I beänt a-gawin' to
 breäk my rule.

II

Doctors, they knows nowt, fur a says what's
 nawways true;
 Naw soort o' koind o' use to sääy the things
 that a do.
 I've 'ed my point o' aäle ivry noight sin' I
 beän 'ere.
 An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight
 for foorty year.

III

Parson's a beän loikewise, an' a sittin' ere
 o' my bed.
 "The Amoighty's a taäkin o' you³ to 'issén,⁴
 my friend," a said,
 An' a towd ma my sins, an' 's toithe⁵ were
 due, an' I gied it in hond;
 I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy
 the lond.

IV

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa
 mooch to larn.
 But a cast oop,⁶ thot a did, 'bout Bessy
 Marris's barne.⁷

Thaw a knaws I hallus voäted wi' Squoire
 an' choorch an' staäte,
 An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin
 the raäte.⁸

V

An' I hallus coom'd to 's choorch afoor moy
 Sally wur deäd,
 An' 'eärd 'um a bummin'⁹ awaäy loike a
 buzzard-clock¹⁰ ower my 'eäd,
 An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but I
 thowt a 'ad summut to sääy,
 An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said,
 an' I coom'd awaäy.

VI

Bessy Marris's barne! tha knaws she laäid
 it to meä.
 Mowt a beän, mayhap, for she wur a bad un,
 sheä.
 'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass, tha
 mun understand;
 I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy
 the lond.

VII

But Parson a cooms an' a goäs, an' a says
 it eäsy an' freeä:
 "The Amoighty 's a taäkin o' you to 'issén,
 my friend," says 'eä.
 I weänt sääy men be loiars, thaw summun
 said it in 'aäste;
 But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an' I 'a
 stubb'd¹¹ Thurnaby waäste.

VIII

D' ya moind the waäste, my lass? naw,
 naw, tha was not born then;
 Theer wur a boggle¹² in it, I often 'eärd 'um,
 mysén;
 Moäst loike a butter-bump,¹³ fur I 'eärd 'um
 about an' about,
 But I stubb'd 'um oop wi' the lot, an' raäved
 an' rembled 'um out.¹⁴

IX

Keäper's¹⁵ it wur; fo' they fun 'um theer
 a-laäid of 'is faäce
 Down i' the woild 'enemies¹⁶ afoor I coom'd
 to the plaäce.

¹Published in 1864. The dialect is the rustic speech of Lincolnshire, where Tennyson was born and brought up.

²Lying. ³you as in hour. ⁴Himself. ⁵Tithe.

⁶Confessed. ⁷Child.

⁸Tax for relief of the poor. ⁹Buzzing. ¹⁰Cockchafer.

¹¹Dug out the tree-roots. ¹²Goblin. ¹³Bittern.

¹⁴Tore him up and threw him out.

¹⁵I. e., it was the ghost of the game-keeper.

¹⁶Anemones.

Noäks or Thimbleby—toäner¹ 'ed shot 'um
as deäð as a naäil.
Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize²—but
git ma my aäle.

x

Dubbut looök at the waäste; theer warn't
not feeäð for a cow;
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz,³ an' looök
at it now—
Warn't worth nowt a haäcre, an' now theer's
lots o' feeäð,
Fourscoor yows⁴ upon it, an' some on it
down i' seeäð.⁵

xi

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meän'd to 'a
stubb'd it at fall,
Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd plow
thruff it an' all,
If Godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let
ma aloän,—
Meä, wi' haäte hoonderd haäcre o' Squire's,
an' lond o' my oän.

xii

Do Godamoighty know what a 's doing
a-taäkin' o' meä?
I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder
a peä;
An' Squire 'ull be sa mad an' all—a' dear,
a' dear!
And I 'a managed for Squire coom Michael-
mas thutty year.

xiii

A mowt 'a taäen owd Joänes, as 'ant not a
'aäpoth⁶ o' sense,
Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins—a niver
mended a fence;
But Godamoighty a moost taäke meä an'
taäke ma now,

Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby
hoälms⁷ to plow!

xiv

Looök 'ow quoloty⁸ smoiles when they seeäs
ma a passin' boy,
Says to thessén,⁹ naw doubt, "What a man
a beä sewer-loy!"¹⁰
Fur they knows what I beän to Squire sin'
fust a coom'd to the 'All;
I done moy duty by Squire an' I done moy
duty boy hall.

xv

Squire's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons
'ull 'a to wroite,
For whoä's to howd the lond ater meä thot
muddles ma quoit;
Sartin-sewer I beä thot a weänt niver give it
to Joänes,
Naw, nor a moänt to Robins—a niver rem-
bles the stoäns.

xvi

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi'
'is kittle o' steäm¹¹
Huzzin' an' maäzin'¹² the blessed feälds wi'
the devil's oän teäm.
Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they
says is sweet,
But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn
abeär to see it.

xvii

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn
bring ma the aäle?
Doctor's a 'toättler,¹³ lass, an a's hallus i' the
owd taäle;¹⁴
I weänt breäk rules fur Doctor, a knows
naw moor nor a floy;
Git ma my aäle, I tell tha, an' if I mun doy
I mun doy.

⁷Holms, flat land near a river.

⁸The gentry (quality). ⁹Themselves. ¹⁰Surely.

¹¹Steam-engine. ¹²Buzzing and amazing.

¹³Teetotaler. ¹⁴He is always at the old story.

¹One or the other. ²The assizes. ³Furze.

⁴Ewes. ⁵Clover. ⁶Halfpennyworth.

IDYLLS OF THE KING¹ THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedivere,
First made and latest left of all the knights,
Told, when the man was no more than a
voice

In the white winter of his age, to those
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other
minds.

For on their march to westward, Bedivere,
Who slowly paced among the slumbering
host,
Heard in his tent the moanings of the King:

"I found Him in the shining of the stars,
I marked Him in the flowering of His fields,
But in His ways with men I find Him not.
I waged His wars, and now I pass and die.
O me! for why is all around us here
As if some lesser god had made the world,
But had not force to shape it as he would,
Till the High God behold it from beyond,
And enter it, and make it beautiful?
Or else as if the world were wholly fair,
But that these eyes of men are dense and
dim,
And have not power to see it as it is—
Perchance, because we see not to the close;—
For I, being simple, thought to work His will,
And have but stricken with the sword in
vain,
And all whereon I leaned in wife and friend
Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm
Reels back into the beast, and is no more.
My God, thou hast forgotten me in my
death!
Nay—God my Christ—I pass but shall not
die."

¹The *Idylls of the King* are twelve in number. In 1859 four were published: "Enid" (in 1884 divided into two Idylls, which in 1888 were finally entitled "The Marriage of Geraint" and "Geraint and Enid"), "Merlin and Vivien," "Lancelot and Elaine," and "Guinevere." In 1869 four more were published: "The Coming of Arthur," "The Holy Grail," "Pelleas and Ettarre," and "The Passing of Arthur." In the last-named Idyll Tennyson incorporated his *Morte d'Arthur* which had been published in 1842 and had been written by 1835. In 1871 "The Last Tournament" was published, in 1872 "Gareth and Lynette," and in 1885 "Balin and Balan," which completed the series. "The Passing of Arthur" is the last of the Idylls as finally arranged, and is based on the narrative in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, Bk. XXI.

Then, ere that last weird battle in the
west,

There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain
killed

In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain
blown

Along a wandering wind, and past his ear
Went shrilling: "Hollow, hollow all delight!
Hail, King! to-morrow thou shalt pass away.
Farewell! there is an isle of rest for thee.

And I am blown along a wandering wind,
And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight!"
And fainter onward, like wild birds that
change

Their season in the night and wail their way
From cloud to cloud, down the long wind
the dream

Shrilled; but in going mingled with dim
cries

Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,
As of some lonely city sacked by night,
When all is lost, and wife and child with
wail

Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke and
called:

"Who spake? A dream. O, light upon the
wind,

Thine, Gawain, was the voice—are these
dim cries

Thine? or doth all that haunts the waste
and wild

Mourn, knowing it will go along with me?"

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and
spake:

"O me, my King, let pass whatever will,
Elves, and the harmless glamour of the field;
But in their stead thy name and glory cling
To all high places like a golden cloud
For ever; but as yet thou shalt not pass.
Light was Gawain in life, and light in death
Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;
And care not thou for dreams from him, but
rise—

I hear the steps of Modred in the west,
And with him many of thy people, and
knights

Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but
grosser grown

Than heathen, spitting at their vows and
thee.

Right well in heart they know thee for the
King.

Arise, go forth and conquer as of old."

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
 "Far other is this battle in the west
 Whereto we move than when we strove in
 youth,
 And brake the petty kings, and fought with
 Rome,
 Or thrust the heathen from the Roman wall,
 And shook him through the north. Ill
 doom is mine
 To war against my people and my knights.
 The king who fights his people fights himself.
 And they my knights, who loved me once,
 the stroke
 That strikes them dead is as my death to me.
 Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way
 Through this blind haze which, ever since I
 saw
 One lying in the dust at Almesbury,
 Hath folded in the passes of the world."

Then rose the King and moved his host by
 night,
 And ever pushed Sir Modréd, league by
 league,
 Back to the sunset bound of Lyonesse¹—
 A land of old upheaven from the abyss
 By fire, to sink into the abyss again;
 Where fragments of forgotten peoples dwelt,
 And the long mountains ended in a coast
 Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
 The phantom circle of a moaning sea.
 There the pursuer could pursue no more,
 And he that fled no further fly the King;
 And there, that day when the great light of
 heaven
 Burned at his lowest in the rolling year,
 On the waste sand by the waste sea they
 closed.
 Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
 Like this last, dim, weird battle of the west.
 A death-white mist slept over sand and sea,
 Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it,
 drew
 Down with his blood, till all his heart was
 cold
 With formless fear; and even on Arthur fell
 Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought.
 For friend and foe were shadows in the mist,
 And friend slew friend not knowing whom
 he slew;
 And some had visions out of golden youth,

¹Supposed to have been a country (now covered by the sea) uniting the Scilly Islands with western Cornwall.

And some beheld the faces of old ghosts
 Look in upon the battle; and in the mist
 Was many a noble deed, many a base,
 And chance and craft and strength in single
 fights,
 And ever and anon with host to host
 Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard
 mail hewn,
 Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands,
 the crash
 Of battle-axes on shattered helms, and
 shrieks
 After the Christ, of those who falling down
 Looked up for heaven, and only saw the mist;
 And shouts of heathen and the traitor
 knights,
 Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blasphemies,
 Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of the
 lungs
 In that close mist, and cryings for the light,
 Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.

Last, as by some one death-bed after wail
 Of suffering, silence follows, or through
 death
 Or death-like swoon, thus over all that shore,
 Save for some whisper of the seething seas,
 A dead hush fell; but when the dolorous day
 Grew drearier toward twilight falling, came
 A bitter wind, clear from the north, and blew
 The mist aside, and with that wind the tide
 Rose, and the pale King glanced across the
 field
 Of battle. But no man was moving there;
 Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,
 Nor yet of heathen; only the wan wave
 Brake in among dead faces, to and fro
 Swaying the helpless hands, and up and
 down
 Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,
 And shivered brands that once had fought
 with Rome,
 And rolling far along the gloomy shores
 The voice of days of old and days to be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,
 And whiter than the mist that all day long
 Had held the field of battle was the King:

"Hearest thou this great voice that shakes
 the world,
 And wastes the narrow realm whereon we
 move,

And beats upon the faces of the dead,
My dead, as though they had not died for
me?—

O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fallen
Confusion, till I know not what I am,
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be king;
Behold, I seem but king among the dead."

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere: "My
king!

King everywhere! and so the dead have
kings,

There also will I worship thee as king.
Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live
Who love thee; but who hates thee, he that
brought

The heathen back among us, yonder stands,
Modred, unharmed, the traitor of thine
house."

Then spake the King: "My house hath
been my doom.

But call not thou this traitor of my house
Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof with
me.

My house are rather they who swear my
vows,

Yea, even while they brake them, owned me
king.

And well for thee, saying in my dark hour,
When all the purport of my throne hath
failed,

That quick or dead thou holdest me for king.
King am I, whatsoever be their cry;

And one last act of kinghood shalt thou see
Yet, ere I pass." And uttering this the

King
Made at the man. Then Modred smote his
liege

Hard on that helm which many a heathen
sword

Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one blow,
Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,
Slew him, and, all but slain himself, he fell.

So all day long the noise of battle rolled
Among the mountains by the winter sea,
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonesse about their lord,
King Arthur; then, because his wound was
deep,

The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,

That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a
sleep

They sleep—the men I loved. I think that
we

Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly
deeds,

Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.

I perish by this people which I made,—
Though Merlin swore that I should come
again

To rule once more—but let what will be be,
I am so deeply smitten through the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride; for thou rememberest
how

In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite,¹ mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I rowed across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known.

But now delay not; take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere;²
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me
word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten through the
helm—

A little thing may harm a wounded man;
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee
word."

So saying, from the ruined shrine he
stepped,
And in the moon athwart³ the place of
tombs,

¹Heavy silk cloth, generally interwoven with gold.

²Lake—the "great water" mentioned above.

³Across.

Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
 Old knights, and over them the sea-wind
 sang
 Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, step-
 ping down
 By zigzag paths and juts of pointed rock,
 Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
 And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
 Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran
 forth
 And sparkled keen with frost against the
 hilt;
 For all the haft twinkled with diamond
 sparks,
 Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
 Of subtlest jewelry. He gazed so long
 That both his eyes were dazzled as he stood,
 This way and that dividing the swift mind,
 In act to throw; but at the last it seemed
 Better to leave Excalibur concealed
 There in the many-knotted water-flags,
 That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
 So strode he back slow to the wounded
 King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
 "Hast thou performed my mission which I
 gave?
 What is it thou hast seen? or what hast
 heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
 "I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
 And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and
 pale:
 "Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy
 name,
 Not rendering true answer, as beseemed
 Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight;
 For surer sign had followed, either hand,
 Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
 This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
 Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,
 As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
 I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me
 word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
 Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
 Counting the dewy pebbles, fixed in thought;
 But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,

How curiously and strangely chased, he
 smote
 His palms together, and he cried aloud:

"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
 Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
 Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
 Which might have pleased the eyes of many
 men.

What good should follow this, if this were
 done?

What harm, undone? Deep harm to dis-
 obey,

Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.

Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
 An act unprofitable, against himself?

The King is sick, and knows not what he
 does.

What record or what relic of my lord
 Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
 And rumors of a doubt? But were this kept,
 Stored in some treasure-house of mighty
 kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
 Saying: 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
 Wrought by the lonely Maiden of the Lake.
 Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the
 deeps

Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'

So might some old man speak in the aftertime
 To all the people, winning reverence.

But now much honor and much fame were
 lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,¹
 And hid Excalibur the second time,
 And so strode back slow to the wounded
 King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heav-
 ily:

"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast
 heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
 "I heard the water lapping on the crag,
 And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in
 wrath:

"Ah miserable, and unkind, untrue,
 Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
 Authority forgets a dying king,

¹Fancy.

Laid widowed of the power in his eye
 That bowed the will. I see thee what thou
 art,
 For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
 In whom should meet the offices of all,
 Thou wouldst betray me for the precious
 hilt;
 Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
 Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
 Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
 And the third time may prosper, get thee
 hence;
 But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
 I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
 And, leaping down the ridges lightly,
 plunged
 Among the bulrush beds, and clutched the
 sword,
 And strongly wheeled and threw it. The
 great brand
 Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
 And flashing round and round, and whirled
 in an arch,
 Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
 Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
 By night, with noises of the Northern Sea.
 So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur;
 But ere he dipped the surface, rose an arm
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
 And caught him by the hilt, and brandished
 him
 Three times, and drew him under in the
 mere.
 And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker
 breath:
 "Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
 Speak out; what is it thou hast heard, or
 seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
 "Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the
 gems
 Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
 Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
 Not though I live three lives of mortal men,
 So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
 Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling
 him;
 But when I looked again, behold an arm,
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

That caught him by the hilt, and brandished
 him
 Three times, and drew him under in the
 mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing
 hard:
 "My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were
 gone.
 Make broad thy shoulders to receive my
 weight,
 And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
 My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half
 rose,
 Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
 And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
 As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
 Remorsefully regarded through his tears,
 And would have spoken, but he found not
 words;
 Then took with care, and kneeling on one
 knee,
 O'er both his shoulders drew the languid
 hands,
 And rising bore him through the place of
 tombs.

But, as he walked, King Arthur panted
 hard,
 Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
 When all the house is mute. So sighed the
 King,
 Muttering and murmuring at his ear,
 "Quick, quick!
 I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
 But the other swiftly strode from ridge to
 ridge,
 Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he
 walked,
 Larger than human on the frozen hills.
 He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
 Before. His own thought drove him like a
 goad.
 Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves
 And barren chasms, and all to left and right
 The bare black cliff clanged round him, as
 he based
 His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
 Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
 And on a sudden, lo, the level lake,
 And the long glories of the winter moon!

Then saw they how there hove a dusky
 barge,
 Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
 Beneath them; and descending they were
 ware
 That all the decks were dense with stately
 forms,
 Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—
 by these
 Three queens with crowns of gold—and
 from them rose
 A cry that shivered to the tingling stars,
 And, as it were one voice, an agony
 Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
 All night in a waste land, where no one
 comes,
 Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmured Arthur, "Place me in
 the barge."
 So to the barge they came. There those
 three queens
 Put forth their hands, and took the King,
 and wept.
 But she that rose the tallest of them all,
 And fairest laid his head upon her lap,
 And loosed the shattered casque,¹ and chafed
 his hands,
 And called him by his name, complaining
 loud,
 And dropping bitter tears against a brow
 Striped with dark blood; for all his face
 was white
 And colorless, and like the withered moon
 Smote by the fresh beam of the springing
 east;
 And all his greaves and cuisses² dashed with
 drops
 Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—
 That made his forehead like a rising sun
 High from the dais-throne—were parched
 with dust,
 Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
 Mixed with the knightly growth that fringed
 his lips.
 So like a shattered column lay the King;
 Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
 From spur to plume a star of tournament,
 Shot through the lists at Camelot, and
 charged
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

¹Helmet.

²Armor for the leg below the knee, and armor for the thigh.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
 "Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
 Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
 For now I see the true old times are dead,
 When every morning brought a noble chance,
 And every chance brought out a noble
 knight.
 Such times have been not since the light
 that led
 The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.³
 But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
 Which was an image of the mighty world;⁴
 And I, the last, go forth companionless,
 And the days darken round me, and the
 years,
 Among new men, strange faces, other
 minds."

And slowly answered Arthur from the
 barge:
 "The old order changeth, yielding place to
 new,
 And God fulfills himself in many ways,
 Lest one good custom should corrupt the
 world.
 Comfort thyself; what comfort is in me?
 I have lived my life, and that which I have
 done
 May He within himself make pure! but
 thou,
 If thou shouldst never see my face again,
 Pray for my soul. More things are wrought
 by prayer
 Than this world dreams of. Wherefore,
 let thy voice
 Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
 For what are men better than sheep or goats
 That nourish a blind life within the brain,
 If, knowing God, they lift not hands of
 prayer
 Both for themselves and those who call
 them friend?
 For so the whole round earth is every way
 Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
 But now farewell. I am going a long way
 With these thou seest—if indeed I go—
 For all my mind is clouded with a doubt—
 To the island-valley of Avilion;⁵
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
 Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies

³See St. Matthew, ii, 11.

⁴According to Malory, "Merlin made the Round Table in tokening of the roundness of the world."

⁵Avalon, home of spirits of the departed.

Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard
lawns
And bowery hollows crowned with summer
sea,
"Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-
breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the
flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedi-
vere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Looked one black dot against the verge of
dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

But when that moan had passed for
evermore,
The stillness of the dead world's winter
dawn
Amazed him, and he groaned, "The King
is gone."
And therewithal came on him the weird
rhyme,
"From the great deep to the great deep he
goes."¹

Whereat he slowly turned and slowly
clomb
The last hard footstep of that iron crag,
Thence marked the black hull moving yet,
and cried:
"He passes to be king among the dead,
And after healing of his grievous wound
He comes again; but—if he come no more—
O me, be yon dark queens in yon black boat,
Who shrieked and wailed, the three whereat
we gazed
On that high day, when, clothed with living
light,
They stood before his throne in silence,
friends
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need?"

Then from the dawn it seemed there came,
but faint
As from beyond the limit of the world,
Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice
Around a king returning from his wars.

Thereat once more he moved about, and
clomb
Even to the highest he could climb, and saw,
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the
King,
Down that long water opening on the deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go
From less to less and vanish into light.
And the new sun rose bringing the new year.

THE HIGHER PAN- THEISM²

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the
hills and the plains,—
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him
who reigns?

Is not the Vision He, though He be not that
which He seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and do we
not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body
and limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division
from Him?

Dark is the world to thee; thyself art the
reason why,
For is He not all but thou, that hast power
to feel "I am I"?

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou
fulfillest thy doom,
Making Him broken gleams and a stifled
splendor and gloom.

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and
Spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer
than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let
us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thunder is
yet His voice.

Law is God, say some; no God at all, says
the fool,
For all we have power to see is a straight
staff bent in a pool;

¹Merlin's song when Arthur was born.

²Published in 1869.

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the
 eye of man cannot see;
 But if we could see and hear, this Vision—
 were it not He?

FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL¹

FLOWER in the crannied wall,
 I pluck you out of the crannies,
 I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
 Little flower—but *if* I could understand
 What you are, root and all, and all in all,
 I should know what God and man is.

THE REVENGE²

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET

I

AT FLORES in the Azores Sir Richard
 Grenville lay,
 And a pinnacle, like a fluttered bird, came
 flying from far away:
 "Spanish ships of war at sea! we have
 sighted fifty-three!"
 Then sware Lord Thomas Howard: "Fore
 God I am no coward;
 But I cannot meet them here, for my ships
 are out of gear,
 And the half my men are sick. I must
 fly, but follow quick.
 We are six ships of the line; can we fight
 with fifty-three?"

II

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: "I know
 you are no coward;
 You fly them for a moment to fight with
 them again.
 But I've ninety men and more that are
 lying sick ashore.
 I should count myself the coward if I left
 them, my Lord Howard,
 To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms
 of Spain."

¹Published in 1869.

²Published in 1878. According to Sir Walter Raleigh—whose account of the fight is the basis of Tennyson's poem—the engagement took place on the afternoon of 10 September, 1591. The English fleet, under the command of Howard, had sailed to the Azores to intercept Spanish treasure-ships on their way from America.

III

So Lord Howard passed away with five ships
 of war that day,
 Till he melted like a cloud in the silent
 summer heaven;
 But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick
 men from the land
 Very carefully and slow,
 Men of Bideford in Devon,
 And we laid them on the ballast down below;
 For we brought them all aboard,
 And they blessed him in their pain, that they
 were not left to Spain,
 To the thumb-screw and the stake, for the
 glory of the Lord.

IV

He had only a hundred seamen to work the
 ship and to fight,
 And he sailed away from Flores till the
 Spaniard came in sight,
 With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the
 weather bow.
 "Shall we fight or shall we fly?
 Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
 For to fight is but to die!
 There'll be little of us left by the time this
 sun be set."
 And Sir Richard said again: "We be all
 good English men.
 Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children
 of the devil,
 For I never turned my back upon Don or
 devil yet."

V

Sir Richard spoke and he laughed, and we
 roared a hurrah, and so
 The little *Revenge* ran on sheer into the
 heart of the foe,
 With her hundred fighters on deck, and her
 ninety sick below;
 For half of their fleet to the right and half
 to the left were seen,
 And the little *Revenge* ran on through the
 long sea-lane between.

VI

Thousands of their soldiers looked down
 from their decks and laughed,
 Thousands of their seamen made mock at
 the mad little craft

Running on and on, till delayed
 By their mountain-like *San Philip* that, of
 fifteen hundred tons,
 And up-shadowing high above us with her
 yawning tiers of guns,
 * Took the breath from our sails, and we
 stayed.

VII

And while now the great *San Philip* hung
 above us like a cloud
 Whence the thunderbolt will fall
 Long and loud,
 Four galleons drew away
 From the Spanish fleet that day,
 And two upon the larboard and two upon
 the starboard lay,
 And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

VIII

But anon the great *San Philip*, she bethought
 herself and went,
 Having that within her womb that had left
 her ill content;
 And the rest they came aboard us, and they
 fought us hand to hand,
 For a dozen times they came with their
 pikes and musketeers,
 And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a
 dog that shakes his ears
 When he leaps from the water to the land.

IX

And the sun went down, and the stars came
 out far over the summer sea,
 But never a moment ceased the fight of the
 one and the fifty-three.
 Ship after ship, the whole night long, their
 high-built galleons came,
 Ship after ship, the whole night long, with
 her battle-thunder and flame;
 Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew
 back with her dead and her shame.
 For some were sunk and many were shattered,
 and so could fight us no more—
 God of battles, was ever a battle like this
 in the world before?

X

For he said, "Fight on! fight on!"
 Though his vessel was all but a wreck;
 And it chanced that, when half of the short
 summer night was gone,
 With a grisly wound to be dressed he had
 left the deck,

But a bullet struck him that was dressing
 it suddenly dead,
 And himself he was wounded again in the
 side and the head,
 And he said, "Fight on! fight on!"

XI

And the night went down, and the sun
 smiled out far over the summer sea,
 And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay
 round us all in a ring;
 But they dared not touch us again, for they
 feared that we still could sting,
 So they watched what the end would be.
 And we had not fought them in vain,
 But in perilous plight were we,
 Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
 And half of the rest of us maimed for life
 In the crash of the cannonades and the
 desperate strife;
 And the sick men down in the hold were
 most of them stark and cold,
 And the pikes were all broken or bent, and
 the powder was all of it spent;
 And the masts and the rigging were lying
 over the side;
 But Sir Richard cried in his English pride:
 "We have fought such a fight for a day and
 a night

As may never be fought again!
 We have won great glory, my men!
 And a day less or more

At sea or ashore,
 We die—does it matter when?
 Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink
 her, split her in twain!
 Fall into the hands of God, not into the
 hands of Spain!"

XII

And the gunner said, "Ay, ay," but the sea-
 men made reply:
 "We have children, we have wives,
 And the Lord hath spared our lives.
 We will make the Spaniard promise, if we
 yield, to let us go;
 We shall live to fight again and to strike
 another blow."
 And the lion there lay dying, and they
 yielded to the foe.

XIII

And the stately Spanish men to their flag,
 ship bore him then,

Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir
 Richard caught at last,
 And they praised him to his face with their
 courtly foreign grace;
 But he rose upon their decks, and he cried:
 "I have fought for Queen and Faith like
 a valiant man and true;
 I have only done my duty as a man is
 bound to do.
 With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville
 die!"
 And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

XIV

And they stared at the dead that had been
 so valiant and true,
 And had holden the power and glory of
 Spain so cheap
 That he dared her with one little ship and
 his English few;
 Was he devil or man? He was devil for
 aught they knew,
 But they sank his body with honor down
 into the deep,
 And they manned the *Revenge* with a
 swarthier alien crew,
 And away she sailed with her loss and
 longed for her own;
 When a wind from the lands they had
 ruined awoke from sleep,
 And the water began to heave and the
 weather to moan,
 And or ever that evening ended a great
 gale blew,
 And a wave like the wave that is raised by
 an earthquake grew,
 Till it smote on their hulls and their sails
 and their masts and their flags,
 And the whole sea plunged and fell on the
 shot-shattered navy of Spain,
 And the little *Revenge* herself went down
 by the island crags
 To be lost evermore in the main.

RIZPAH¹

17—

I

WAILING, wailing, wailing, the wind over
 land and sea—
 And Willy's voice in the wind, "O mother,
 come out to me!"

Why should he call me to-night, when he
 knows that I cannot go?
 For the downs are as bright as day, and the
 full moon stares at the snow.

II

We should be seen, my dear; they would
 spy us out of the town.
 The loud black nights for us, and the storm
 rushing over the down,
 When I cannot see my own hand, but am
 led by the creak of the chain,
 And grovel and grope for my son till I find
 myself drenched with the rain.

III

Anything fallen again? nay—what was
 there left to fall?
 I have taken them home, I have numbered
 the bones, I have hidden them all.
 What am I saying? and what are *you*? do
 you come as a spy?
 Falls? what falls? who knows? As the
 tree falls so must it lie.

IV

Who let her in? how long has she been?
 you—what have you heard?
 Why did you sit so quiet? you never have
 spoken a word.
 O—to pray with me—yes—a lady—none of
 their spies—
 But the night has crept into my heart, and
 begun to darken my eyes.

V

Ah—you, that have lived so soft, what
 should *you* know of the night,
 The blast and the burning shame and the
 bitter frost and the fright?
 I have done it, while you were asleep—you
 were only made for the day.
 I have gathered my baby together—and
 now you may go your way.

VI

Nay—for it's kind of you, madam, to sit
 by an old dying wife.
 But say nothing hard of my boy, I have
 only an hour of life.

¹Published in 1880. The poem is founded on an
 incident read by Tennyson in a penny magazine (see
 the *Memoir* by Hallam Tennyson, II, 249-251). As

the numerals under the title indicate, the time of the
 story is the eighteenth century. For the source of the
 title see 2 Samuel, xxi, 1-14.

I kissed my boy in the prison, before he
went out to die.
"They dared me to do it," he said, and he
never has told me a lie.
I whipped him for robbing an orchard once
when he was but a child—
"The farmer dared me to do it," he said; he
was always so wild—
And idle—and couldn't be idle—my Willy
—he never could rest.
The King should have made him a soldier,
he would have been one of his best.

VII

But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and
they never would let him be good;
They swore that he dare not rob the mail,¹
and he swore that he would;
And he took no life, but he took one purse,
and when all was done
He flung it among his fellows—"I'll none
of it," said my son.

VIII

I came into court to the judge and the
lawyers. I told them my tale,
God's own truth—but they killed him, they
killed him for robbing the mail.
They hanged him in chains for a show—we
had always borne a good name—
To be hanged for a thief—and then put
away—isn't that enough shame?
Dust to dust—low down—let us hide! but
they set him so high
That all the ships of the world could stare
at him, passing by.
God'll pardon the hell-black raven and
horrible fowls of the air,
But not the black heart of the lawyer who
killed him and hanged him there.

IX

And the jailer forced me away. I had bid
him my last good-bye;
They had fastened the door of his cell. "O
mother!" I heard him cry.
I couldn't get back though I tried, he had
something further to say,
And now I never shall know it. The jailer
forced me away.

X

Then since I couldn't but hear that cry of
my boy that was dead,
They seized me and shut me up: they
fastened me down on my bed.
"Mother, O mother!"—he called in the dark
to me year after year—
They beat me for that, they beat me—you
know that I couldn't but hear;
And then at the last they found I had
grown so stupid and still
They let me abroad again—but the creatures
had worked their will.

XI

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of my
bone was left—
I stole them all from the lawyers—and you,
will you call it a theft?—
My baby, the bones that had sucked me,
the bones that had laughed and had
cried—
Theirs? O, no! they are mine—not theirs
—they had moved in my side.

XII

Do you think I was scared by the bones?
I kissed 'em, I buried 'em all—
I can't dig deep, I am old—in the night
by the churchyard wall.
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the trumpet
of judgment 'ill sound,
But I charge you never to say that I laid
him in holy ground.

XIII

They would scratch him up—they would
hang him again on the curséd tree.
Sin? O, yes, we are sinners, I know—let all
that be,
And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's
goodwill toward men—
"Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord"
—let me hear it again;
"Full of compassion and mercy—long-
suffering." Yes, O, yes!
For the lawyer is born but to murder—
the Savior lives but to bless.
He'll never put on the black cap except
for the worst of the worst,²
And the first may be last—I have heard it
in church—and the last may be first.

²In English courts the judge puts on a black cap before giving a sentence of death.

¹Mail-coach.

Suffering—O, long-suffering—yes, as the
 Lord must know,
 Year after year in the mist and the wind
 and the shower and the snow.

XIV

Heard, have you? what? they have told
 you he never repented his sin.
 How do they know it? are *they* his mother?
 are *you* of his kin?
 Heard! have you ever heard, when the
 storm on the downs began,
 The wind that 'ill wail like a child and the
 sea that 'ill moan like a man?

XV

Election, Election, and Reprobation¹—it's
 all very well.
 But I go to-night to my boy, and I shall
 not find him in hell.
 For I cared so much for my boy that the
 Lord has looked into my care,
 And He means me I'm sure to be happy
 with Willy, I know not where.

XVI

And if *he* be lost—but to save *my* soul,
 that is all your desire—
 Do you think I care for *my* soul if my boy be
 gone to the fire?
 I have been with God in the dark—go, go,
 you may leave me alone—
 You have never borne a child—you are
 just as hard as a stone.

XVII

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think that
 you mean to be kind,
 But I cannot hear what you say for my
 Willy's voice in the wind—
 The snow and the sky so bright—he used but
 to call in the dark,
 And he calls to me now from the church and
 not from the gibbet—for hark!
 Nay—you can hear it yourself—it is coming
 shaking the walls—
 Willy—the moon's in a cloud—Good-night.
 I am going. He calls.

THE VOYAGE OF
 MAELDUNE²

(FOUNDED ON AN IRISH LEGEND. A.D. 700)

I

I WAS the chief of the race—he had stricken
 my father dead—
 But I gathered my fellows together, I swore
 I would strike off his head.
 Each of them looked like a king, and was
 noble in birth as in worth,
 And each of them boasted he sprang from
 the oldest race upon earth.
 Each was as brave in the fight as the bravest
 hero of song,
 And each of them liefer had died than have
 done one another a wrong.
He lived on an isle in the ocean—we sailed
 on a Friday morn—
 He that had slain my father the day before
 I was born.

II

And we came to the isle in the ocean, and
 there on the shore was he.
 But a sudden blast blew us out and away
 through a boundless sea.

III

And we came to the Silent Isle that we
 never had touched at before,
 Where a silent ocean always broke on a
 silent shore,
 And the brooks glittered on in the light
 without sound, and the long waterfalls
 Poured in a thunderless plunge to the base
 of the mountain walls,
 And the poplar and cypress unshaken by
 storm flourished up beyond sight,
 And the pine shot aloft from the crag to an
 unbelievable height,
 And high in the heaven above it there
 flickered a songless lark,
 And the cock couldn't crow, and the bull
 couldn't low, and the dog couldn't bark.
 And round it we went, and through it, but
 never a murmur, a breath—
 It was all of it fair as life, it was all of it quiet
 as death,

¹Terms associated with the Calvinistic doctrines of
 grace and foreordination.

²Published in 1880. The story which served as a
 basis for the poem is to be found in P. W. Joyce's
Old Celtic Romances.

And we hated the beautiful isle, for whenever
we strove to speak
Our voices were thinner and fainter than
any flittermouse-shriek;¹
And the men that were mighty of tongue
and could raise such a battle-cry
That a hundred who heard it would rush on a
thousand lances and die—
O, they to be dumbled by the charm—so
flustered with anger were they
They almost fell on each other; but after
we sailed away.

IV

And we came to the Isle of Shouting; we
landed, a score of wild birds
Cried from the topmost summit with human
voices and words.
Once in an hour they cried, and whenever
their voices pealed
The steer fell down at the plow and the
harvest died from the field,
And the men dropped dead in the valleys
and half of the cattle went lame,
And the roof sank in on the hearth, and the
dwelling broke into flame;
And the shouting of these wild birds ran
into the hearts of my crew,
Till they shouted along with the shouting and
seized one another and slew.
But I drew them the one from the other;
I saw that we could not stay,
And we left the dead to the birds, and we
sailed with our wounded away.

V

And we came to the Isle of Flowers; their
breath met us out on the seas,
For the Spring and the middle Summer sat
each on the lap of the breeze;
And the red passion-flower to the cliffs, and
the dark-blue clematis, clung,
And starred with a myriad blossom the long
convolvulus hung;
And the topmost spire of the mountain was
lilies in lieu of snow,
And the lilies like glaciers winded down,
running out below
Through the fire of the tulip and poppy, the
blaze of gorse, and the blush
Of millions of roses that sprang without
leaf or a thorn from the bush;

And the whole isle-side flashing down from
the peak without ever a tree
Swept like a torrent of gems from the sky
to the blue of the sea.
And we rolled upon capes of crocus and
vaunted our kith and our kin,
And we wallowed in beds of lilies, and
chanted the triumph of Finn,²
Till each like a golden image was pollened
from head to feet
And each was as dry as a cricket, with thirst
in the middle-day heat.
Blossom and blossom, and promise of
blossom, but never a fruit!
And we hated the Flowering Isle, as we
hated the isle that was mute,
And we tore up the flowers by the million
and flung them in bight and bay,
And we left but a naked rock, and in anger
we sailed away.

VI

And we came to the Isle of Fruits; all
round from the cliffs and the capes,
Purple or amber, dangled a hundred fathom
of grapes,
And the warm melon lay like a little sun
on the tawny sand,
And the fig ran up from the beach and rioted
over the land,
And the mountain arose like a jeweled
throne through the fragrant air,
Glowing with all-colored plums and with
golden masses of pear,
And the crimson and scarlet of berries that
flamed upon bine and vine,
But in every berry and fruit was the poison-
ous pleasure of wine;
And the peak of the mountain was apples,
the hugest that ever were seen,
And they pressed, as they grew, on each
other, with hardly a leaflet between,
And all of them redder than rosiest health
or than utterest shame,
And setting, when Even descended, the very
sunset aflame.
And we stayed three days, and we gorged
and we maddened, till every one
drew
His sword on his fellow to slay him, and
ever they struck and they slew;

¹The cry of the bat.

²Finn, son of Cumal, was the greatest of the heroes of ancient Ireland.

And myself, I had eaten but sparingly, and
fought till I sundered the fray,
Then I bade them remember my father's
death, and we sailed away.

VII

And we came to the Isle of Fire; we were
lured by the light from afar,
For the peak sent up one league of fire to
the Northern Star;
Lured by the glare and the blare, but
scarcely could stand upright,
For the whole isle shuddered and shook like
a man in a mortal affright.
We were giddy besides with the fruits we had
gorged, and so crazed that at last
There were some leaped into the fire; and
away we sailed, and we passed
Over that undersea isle, where the water is
clearer than air.
Down we looked—what a garden! O bliss,
what a Paradise there!
Towers of a happier time, low down in a
rainbow deep
Silent palaces, quiet fields of eternal sleep!
And three of the gentlest and best of my
people, whate'er I could say,
Plunged head-down in the sea, and the
Paradise trembled away.

VIII

And we came to the Bounteous Isle, where
the heavens lean low on the land,
And ever at dawn from the cloud glittered
o'er us a sun-bright hand,
Then it opened and dropped at the side of
each man, as he rose from his rest,
Bread enough for his need till the laborless
day dipped under the west;
And we wandered about it and through it.
O, never was time so good!
And we sang of the triumphs of Finn, and
the boast of our ancient blood,
And we gazed at the wandering wave as we
sat by the gurgle of springs,
And we chanted the songs of the Bards and
the glories of fairy kings.
But at length we began to be weary, to
sigh, and to stretch and yawn,
Till we hated the Bounteous Isle and the
sun-bright hand of the dawn,
For there was not an enemy near, but the
whole green isle was our own,
And we took to playing at ball, and we took
to throwing the stone,

And we took to playing at battle, but that
was a perilous play,
For the passion of battle was in us, we slew
and we sailed away.

IX

And we came to the Isle of Witches and
heard their musical cry—
"Come to us, O, come, come!" in the stormy
red of a sky
Dashing the fires and the shadows of dawn
on the beautiful shapes,
For a wild witch naked as heaven stood on
each of the loftiest capes,
And a hundred ranged on the rock like
white sea-birds in a row,
And a hundred gamboled and pranced on
the wrecks in the sand below,
And a hundred splashed from the ledges,
and bosomed the burst of the spray;
But I knew we should fall on each other,
and hastily sailed away.

X

And we came in an evil time to the Isle of
the Double Towers,
One was of smooth-cut stone, one carved
all over with flowers,
But an earthquake always moved in the
hollows under the dells,
And they shocked on each other and butted
each other with clashing of bells,
And the daws flew out of the towers and
jangled and wrangled in vain,
And the clash and boom of the bells rang
into the heart and the brain,
Till the passion of battle was on us, and all
took sides with the towers,
There were some for the clean-cut stone,
there were more for the carven flowers,
And the wrathful thunder of God pealed
over us all the day,
For the one half slew the other, and after
we sailed away.

XI

And we came to the Isle of a Saint who
had sailed with Saint Brendan¹ of yore,
He had lived ever since on the isle and his
winters were fifteen score,

¹According to Celtic legend St. Brendan in the sixth century set sail from Kerry and went westward into the Atlantic. He had marvelous adventures, in some respects similar to those of Maeldune.

And his voice was low as from other worlds,
 and his eyes were sweet,
 And his white hair sank to his heels, and his
 white beard fell to his feet,
 And he spake to me: "O Maeldune, let be
 this purpose of thine!
 Remember the words of the Lord when he
 told us, 'Vengeance is mine!'
 His fathers have slain thy fathers in war or
 in single strife,
 Thy fathers have slain his fathers, each
 taken a life for a life,
 Thy father had slain his father, how long
 shall the murder last?
 Go back to the Isle of Finn and suffer the
 Past to be Past."
 And we kissed the fringe of his beard, and
 we prayed as we heard him pray,
 And the holy man he assoiled us,¹ and sadly
 we sailed away.

XII

And we came to the isle we were blown from,
 and there on the shore was he,
 •The man that had slain my father. I saw
 him and let him be.
 O weary was I of the travel, the trouble,
 the strife, and the sin,
 When I landed again with a tithe of my men,
 on the Isle of Finn!

TO VIRGIL²

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE MAN-
 TUANS FOR THE NINETEENTH CENTENARY
 OF VIRGIL'S DEATH

I

ROMAN VIRGIL, thou that singest
 Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,
 Ilion falling, Rome arising,
 wars, and filial faith, and Dido's
 pyre;

II

Landscape-lover, lord of language
 more than he that sang the "Works
 and Days,"³
 All the chosen coin of fancy
 flashing out from many a golden
 phrase;

¹Absolved us from our sins.

²Published in November, 1882.

³Hesiod.

III

Thou that singest wheat and woodland,
 tilth and vineyard, hive and horse
 and herd;
 All the charm of all the Muses
 often flowering in a lonely word;

IV

Poet of the happy Tityrus⁴
 piping underneath his beechen bow-
 ers;
 Poet of the poet-satyr⁵
 whom the laughing shepherd bound
 with flowers;

V

Chanter of the Pollio,⁶ glorying
 in the blissful years again to be,
 Summers of the snakeless meadow,
 unlaborious earth and oarless sea;

VI

Thou that seest Unive sal
 Nature moved by Universal Mind;⁷
 Thou majestic in thy sadness
 at the doubtful doom of human
 kind;

VII

Light among the vanished ages;
 star that gildest yet this phantom
 shore;
 Golden branch amid the shadows,⁸
 kings and realms that pass to rise no
 more;

VIII

Now thy Forum roars no longer,
 fallen every purple Cæsar's dome—
 Though thine ocean-roll of rhythm
 sound for ever of Imperial Rome—

IX

Now the Rome of slaves hath perished,
 and the Rome of freemen holds her
 place,
 I, from out the Northern Island
 sundered once from all the human
 race,⁹

⁴A shepherd in Virgil's first *Eclogue*.

⁵Silenus, *Eclogue* VI. ⁶*Eclogue* IV.

⁷See *Æneid*, VI, 727. ⁸See *Æneid*, VI, 208.

⁹See *Eclogue* I, 67.

X

I salute thee, Mantovano,¹
 I that loved thee since my day began,
 Wielder of the stateliest measure
 ever molded by the lips of man.

VASTNESS²

I

MANY a hearth upon our dark globe sighs
 after many a vanished face,
 Many a planet by many a sun may roll
 with the dust of a vanished race.

II

Raving politics, never at rest—as this poor
 earth's pale history runs,—
 What is it all but a trouble of ants in the
 gleam of a million million of suns?

III

Lies upon this side, lies upon that side,
 truthless violence mourned by the wise,
 Thousands of voices drowning his own in a
 popular torrent of lies upon lies;

IV

Stately purposes, valor in battle, glorious
 annals of army and fleet,
 Death for the right cause, death for the wrong
 cause, trumpets of victory, groans of
 defeat;

V

Innocence seethed in her mother's milk;
 and Charity setting the martyr aflame,
 Thralldom who walks with the banner of
 Freedom, and recks not to ruin a realm
 in her name.

VI

Faith at her zenith, or all but lost in the
 gloom of doubts that darken the schools;
 Craft with a bunch of all-heal in her hand,
 followed up by her vassal legion of fools;

VII

Trade flying over a thousand seas with her
 spice and her vintage, her silk and her
 corn;
 Desolate offing, sailorless harbors, famishing
 populace, wharves forlorn;

VIII

Star of the morning, Hope in the sunrise;
 gloom of the evening, Life at a close;
 Pleasure who flaunts on her wide downway
 with her flying robe and her poisoned
 rose;

IX

Pain, that has crawled from the corpse of
 Pleasure, a worm which writhes all day,
 and at night
 Stirs up again in the heart of the sleeper,
 and stings him back to the curse of the
 light;

X

Wealth with his wines and his wedded har-
 lots; honest Poverty, bare to the bone;
 Opulent Avarice, lean as Poverty; Flattery
 gilding the rift in a throne;

XI

Fame blowing out from her golden trumpet a
 jubilant challenge to Time and to Fate;
 Slander, her shadow, sowing the nettle on
 all the laureled graves of the great;

XII

Love for the maiden, crowned with marriage,
 no regrets for aught that has been,
 Household happiness, gracious children, debt-
 less competence, golden mean;

XIII

National hatreds of whole generations, and
 pigmy spites of the village spire;
 Vows that will last to the last death-ruckle,
 and vows that are snapped in a moment
 of fire;

XIV

He that has lived for the lust of the minute,
 and died in the doing it, flesh without
 mind;
 He that has nailed all flesh to the Cross, till
 Self died out in the love of his kind;

XV

Spring and Summer and Autumn and
 Winter, and all these old revolutions of
 earth;
 All new-old revolutions of Empire—change
 of the tide—what is all of it worth?

¹*I. e.*, Mantuan. Virgil was born at Mantua.

²Published in 1885.

XVI

What the philosophies, all the sciences,
 poesy, varying voices of prayer,
 All that is noblest, all that is basest, all
 that is filthy with all that is fair?

XVII

What is it all, if we all of us end but in
 being our own corpse-coffins at last?
 Swallowed in Vastness, lost in Silence,
 drowned in the deeps of a meaningless
 Past?

XVIII

What but a murmur of gnats in the gloom,
 or a moment's anger of bees in their
 hive?—

Peace, let it be! for I loved him, and love
 him for ever; the dead are not dead
 but alive.

MERLIN AND THE GLEAM¹

I

O YOUNG Mariner,
 You from the haven
 Under the sea-cliff,
 You that are watching
 The gray Magician
 With eyes of wonder,
 I am Merlin,
 And I am dying,
 I am Merlin
 Who follow the Gleam.

II

Mighty the Wizard
 Who found me at sunrise
 Sleeping, and woke me
 And learned me² Magic!
 Great the Master,
 And sweet the Magic,
 When over the valley,
 In early summers,
 Over the mountain,
 On human faces,
 And all around me,
 Moving to melody,
 Floated the Gleam.

¹Published in 1889. Merlin may be taken, with reservations, to stand for Tennyson himself.

²An archaism.

III

Once at the croak of a Raven who
 crossed it
 A barbarous people,
 Blind to the magic
 And deaf to the melody,
 Snarled at and cursed me.
 A demon vexed me,
 The light retreated,
 The landskip darkened,
 The melody deadened,
 The Master whispered,
 "Follow the Gleam."

IV

Then to the melody,
 Over a wilderness
 Gliding, and glancing at
 Elf of the woodland,
 Gnome of the cavern,
 Griffin and Giant,
 And dancing of Fairies
 In desolate hollows,
 And wraiths of the mountain,
 And rolling of dragons
 By warble of water,
 Or cataract music
 Of falling torrents,
 Flitted the Gleam.

V

Down from the mountain
 And over the level,
 And streaming and shining on
 Silent river,
 Silvery willow,
 Pasture and ploughland,
 Innocent maidens,
 Garrulous children,
 Homestead and harvest,
 Reaper and gleaner,
 And rough-ruddy faces
 Of lowly labor,
 Slided the Gleam—

VI

Then, with a melody
 Stronger and statelier,
 Led me at length
 To the city and palace
 Of Arthur the King;
 Touched at the golden
 Cross of the churches,
 Flashed on the tournament,

Flickered and bickered
From helmet to helmet,
And last on the forehead
Of Arthur the blameless
Rested the Gleam.

VII

Clouds and darkness
Closed upon Camelot;
Arthur had vanished
I knew not whither,
The king who loved me,
And cannot die;
For out of the darkness
Silent and slowly
The Gleam, that had waned to a
wintry glimmer
On icy fallow
And faded forest,
Drew to the valley
Named of the shadow,
And slowly brightening
Out of the glimmer,
And slowly moving again to a melody
Yearningly tender,
Fell on the shadow,
No longer a shadow,
But clothed with the Gleam.

VIII

And broader and brighter
The Gleam flying onward,
Wed to the melody,
Sang through the world;
And slower and fainter,
Old and weary,
But eager to follow,
I saw, whenever
In passing it glanced upon
Hamlet or city,
That under the Crosses
The dead man's garden,
The mortal hillock,
Would break into blossom;
And so to the land's
Last limit I came—
And can no longer,
But die rejoicing,
For through the Magic
Of Him the Mighty,
Who taught me in childhood,
There on the border
Of boundless Ocean,

And all but in Heaven
Hovers the Gleam.

IX

Not of the sunlight,
Not of the moonlight,
Not of the starlight!
O young Mariner,
Down to the haven,
Call your companions,
Launch your vessel
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it,
Follow the Gleam.

BY AN EVOLUTIONIST¹

THE Lord let the house of a brute to the
soul of a man,
And the man said, "Am I your debtor?"
And the Lord—"Not yet; but make it as
clean as you can,
And then I will let you a better."

I

If my body come from brutes, my soul un-
certain or a fable,
Why not bask amid the senses while the
sun of morning shines,
I, the finer brute rejoicing in my hounds,
and in my stable,
Youth and health, and birth and wealth,
and choice of women and of wines?

II

What hast thou done for me, grim Old
Age, save breaking my bones on the
rack?
Would I had passed in the morning that
looks so bright from afar!

OLD AGE

Done for thee? starved the wild beast that
was linked with thee eighty years back.
Less weight now for the ladder-of-heaven
that hangs on a star.

I

If my body come from brutes, though some-
what finer than their own,
I am heir, and this my kingdom. Shall
the royal voice be mute?

¹Published in 1889.

No, but if the rebel subject seek to drag me
from the throne,
Hold the scepter, Human Soul, and rule
thy province of the brute.

11

I have climbed to the snows of Age, and I
gaze at a field in the Past,
Where I sank with the body at times in
the sloughs of a low desire,
But I hear no yelp of the beast, and the
Man is quiet at last,
As he stands on the heights of his life with
a glimpse of a height that is higher.

CROSSING THE BAR¹

SUNSET and evening star,
And one clear call for me!

¹Published in 1889. Tennyson asked that this be placed at the end of all editions of his poems.

And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the bound-
less deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For though from out our bourne of Time and
Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)

Browning's father was a clerk in the Bank of England who lived in Camberwell, a suburb of London in the early nineteenth century. He was a man in easy circumstances and of unusual culture, interested in art, in music, and in literature. He had a good collection of pictures and a large library containing many curious and out-of-the-way books. In Camberwell Browning was born on 7 May, 1812. His education was almost entirely derived from his parents and the influences of his home. Occasionally he attended nearby schools and occasionally, when he made it plain that conventional methods of education were not for him, he had a private tutor at home, but his formal training was decidedly irregular. He was enrolled in the University of London, but spent only a short time in university studies and made no attempt to take a degree. All this does not mean that Browning was an idle and ignorant youth; on the contrary, he was very early a man of wide and curious learning, with a cultivated taste in both painting and music. But it means that what he learned came from the influences of his home, from the encouragement of his parents, from reading in his father's library, and from the cultivated friends of his family. Browning early began the writing of verse and early fell under the influence of Shelley. His first published poem, *Pauline*, published in 1833 when he was twenty-one, shows this influence strongly. *Pauline* made no impression on the public, but Browning's next poem, *Paracelsus*, published in 1835, while it attracted only a few readers, gained for its author the attention or friendship of a number of men of letters. Among these were Wordsworth, Landor, Leigh Hunt, and Dickens. *Paracelsus* also attracted the attention of the actor-manager Macready, and led him to ask Browning for a play. As a result Browning wrote *Strafford*, which was acted at the Covent Garden Theater in 1837 and published in the same year. Browning had dramatic genius, as was evident from *Paracelsus*, and it was natural both for him and for Macready to suppose that he could succeed with plays, yet it is unfortunate that he was led to expend as much time as he did on the effort. For *Strafford*, while it was not a complete failure, had only a very qualified success. Nevertheless Browning went on to write other plays, hoping for a better result, producing work which shows powerfully some of the elements of dramatic genius, and yet not writing one play which could hold the stage with complete success. This was true even of *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* (1843), the best of the half-dozen or more plays he wrote and one which evoked the enthusiastic praise of Dickens. The truth would seem to be that Browning, knowing that he had dramatic genius, did not yet know his limitations, and needed his eight years' trial of play-writing in order to help him to the discovery of the form of poetry which he was soon to make peculiarly his own and in which he did his best work with all his powers in free play. Not all of Browning's time during these years, however, was spent upon "regular" drama. In 1841 he published *Pippa Passes*, a series of dramatic scenes, which contains poetry that can scarcely be overpraised and at least one scene, the incident of Ottima and Sebald, of tremendous power. And in the late eighteen-thirties he had been working on another long poem into which he put the fruit of much study and for the sake of which he had made his first visit to Italy. This poem, however, *Sordello*, published in 1840, was a worse failure than were the plays. Largely because of its obscure style it disappointed Browning's friends and alienated from him for many years the general reading public. But two years later, with the publication of *Dramatic Lyrics*, Browning showed that he was beginning to find his true work, and this and *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics*, published in 1845, contained some of his finest poems.

About this time Browning became acquainted with Elizabeth Barrett, herself a gifted writer of poetry, conducted with her a correspondence which has become famous, finally met her and talked with her, and in 1846 married her despite the violent opposition of her father. Partly on account of Mrs. Browning's delicate health and partly because of difficulties with her father, the Brownings went to Italy and settled in Florence, where they remained until Mrs. Browning's death in 1861. During this period Browning published *Christmas Eve and Easter Day* (1850) and *Men and Women* (1855), the latter volume containing some of the best and most widely liked of all his poems. After Mrs. Browning's death Browning lived no more in Florence. He returned to England and for some years spent much time in London. In 1864 he published *Dramatis Personae*, and in 1868-1869 his longest work and, in the opinion of many, his greatest, *The Ring and the Book*, a series of poems founded on an account which he had accidentally found of a Roman murder trial. In later years Browning published much, including several translations

of Greek plays, but as he grew older his style grew more difficult and harsh, and a certain waywardness or indifference to the legitimate demands of readers, perhaps always to some extent apparent in his work, increased. The consequences is that much, if not most, of his latest work is inferior to the work of his best years and is no longer widely read. Browning died in his son's house at Venice on 12 December, 1889, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

The form of poetry which Browning, as was said above, made peculiarly his own is commonly known as the dramatic monologue—a kind of poem in which some person speaks to another, or to others, self-revealingly, either narrating some incident or telling the story of his life, but in any case laying bare his soul through what he says. This form of poem gave Browning full scope for his dramatic genius without making apparent his limitations. It enabled him to exercise his dramatic imagination in the creation of a single character and a single scene without calling upon him for a large constructive ability which he did not have. It was the happiest of discoveries for Browning that here was a kind of poem apparently designed expressly for him, and he proceeded to put into it all that he had of rich imagination, deep insight, tender or delicate feeling, and curious learning. He even, when he came to write a long poem, cast *The Ring and the Book* in this form, making it a series of monologues in which the characters of his story and several spectators each tells the story in his own way. This was an extraordinary experiment, bound to result, as it did, in some unevenness of execution and interest, but resulting also in the greatest of his achievements in the dramatic delineation of character.

CAVALIER TUNES¹

I. MARCHING ALONG

KENTISH Sir Byng stood for his King,
Bidding the crop-headed Parliament swing:
And, pressing a troop unable to stoop
*And see the rogues flourish and honest folk
droop,

Marched them along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

God for King Charles! Pym and such carles
To the Devil that prompts 'em their treason-
ous parles!

Cavaliers, up! Lips from the cup,
Hands from the pasty, nor bite take nor sup
Till you're—

CHO.—Marching along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing
this song.

Hampden to hell, and his obsequies' knell.
Serve Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young Harry² as
well!

England, good cheer! Rupert is near!
Kentish and loyalists, keep we not here,

CHO.—Marching along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing
this song?

Then, God for King Charles! Pym and his
snarls

To the Devil that pricks on such pestilent
carles!

Hold by the right, you double your might;
So, onward to Nottingham,³ fresh for the fight,

CHO.—March we along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing
this song!

II. GIVE A ROUSE

King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

Who gave me the goods that went since?
Who raised me the house that sank once?
Who helped me to gold I spent since?
Who found me in wine you drank once?

CHO.—King Charles, and who'll do him
right now?

King Charles, and who's ripe for
fight now?

Give a rouse: here's, in hell's de-
spite now,
King Charles!

To whom used my boy George quaff else,
By the old fool's side that begot him?
For whom did he cheer and laugh else,
While Noll's⁴ damned troopers shot him?

CHO.—King Charles, and who'll do him
right now?

King Charles, and who's ripe for
fight now?

Give a rouse: here's, in hell's de-
spite now,
King Charles!

¹Published in 1842.

²Sir Henry Vane the younger

³Here Charles I's standard was raised in 1642.

⁴Cromwell's.

III. BOOT AND SADDLE

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!

Rescue my castle before the hot day

Brightens to blue from its silvery gray.

CHO.—Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say;
Many's the friend there, will listen and pray
"God's luck to gallants that strike up the
lay—

CHO.—Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads'
array:

Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my
fay,

CHO.—Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest and
gay,

Laughs when you talk of surrendering, "Nay!
I've better counselors; what counsel they?"

CHO.—Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

THE LOST LEADER¹

JUST for a handful of silver he left us,

Just for a riband to stick in his coat—

Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,

Lost all the others she lets us devote;

They, with the gold to give, doled him out
silver,

So much was theirs who so little allowed:
How all our copper had gone for his service!

Rags—were they purple, his heart had
been proud!

We that had loved him so, followed him,
honored him,

Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language, caught his clear
accents,

Made him our pattern to live and to die!
Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
Burns, Shelley, were with us,—they watch
from their graves!

He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,
—He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!

We shall march prospering,—not through
his presence;

Songs may inspirit us,—not from his lyre;
Deeds will be done,—while he boasts his
quiescence,

Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade
aspire:

Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul
more,

One task more declined, one more footpath
untrod,

One more devils'-triumph and sorrow for
angels,

One wrong more to man, one more insult
to God!

Life's night begins: let him never come
back to us!

There would be doubt, hesitation and pain,
Forced praise on our part—the glimmer of
twilight,

Never glad confident morning again!
Best fight on well, for we taught him—strike
gallantly,

Menace our heart ere we master his own;
Then let him receive the new knowledge and
wait us,

Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne!

SOLILOQUY OF THE
SPANISH CLOISTER²

GR-R-R—there go, my heart's abhorrence!

Water your damned flower-pots, do!

If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,

God's blood, would not mine kill you!

—
tapestry on my wall I can recognize figures which have
struck out a fancy, on occasion, that though truly enough
thus derived, yet would be preposterous as a copy,
so, though I dare not deny the original of my little
poem, I altogether refuse to have it considered as the
'very effigies' of such a moral and intellectual superiority.

"Faithfully yours,

"ROBERT BROWNING."

²Published in 1842.

¹Published in 1845. Browning was often asked if Wordsworth was the subject of this poem. The following letter, written to A. B. Grosart on 24 February, 1875, is one of his replies:

"DEAR MR. GROSART,—I have been asked the question you now address me with, and as duly answered it, I can't remember how many times; there is no sort of objection to one more assurance or rather confession, on my part, that I *did* in my hasty youth presume to use the great and venerated personality of Wordsworth as a sort of painter's model; one from which this or the other particular feature may be selected and turned to account; had I intended more, above all, such a boldness as portraying the entire man, I should not have talked about 'handfuls of silver and bits of ribbon.' These never influenced the change of politics in the great poet, whose defection, nevertheless, accompanied as it was by a regular face-about of his special party, was to my juvenile inapprehension, and even mature consideration, an event to deplore. But just as in the

What? your myrtle-bush wants trimming?

Oh, that rose has prior claims—
Needs its leaden vase filled brimming?
Hell dry you up with its flames!

At the meal we sit together:

*Salve tibi!*¹ I must hear
Wise talk of the kind of weather,
Sort of season, time of year:
Not a plenteous cork-crop: scarcely
Dare we hope oak-galls, I doubt:
What's the Latin name for "parsley"?
What's the Greek name for Swine's Snout?

Whew! We'll have our platter burnished,
Laid with care on our own shelf!
With a fire-new spoon we're furnished,
And a goblet for ourself,
Rinsed like something sacrificial
Ere 'tis fit to touch our chaps—
Marked with L for our initial!
(He-he! There his lily snaps!)

Saint, forsooth! While brown Dolores
Squats outside the Convent bank
With Sanchicha, telling stories,
Steeping tresses in the tank,
Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horsehairs,
—Can't I see his dead eye glow,
Bright as 'twere a Barbary corsair's?
(That is, if he'd let it show!)

When he finishes refection,
Knife and fork he never lays
Cross-wise, to my recollection,
As do I, in Jesu's praise.
I the Trinity illustrate,
Drinking watered orange-pulp—
In three sips the Arian² frustrate;
While he drains his at one gulp.

Oh, those melons! If he's able
We're to have a feast! so nice!
One goes to the Abbot's table,
All of us get each a slice.
How go on your flowers? None double?
Not one fruit-sort can you spy?
Strange!—And I, too, at such trouble
Keep them close-nipped on the sly!

There's a great text in Galatians,³
Once you trip on it, entails
Twenty-nine distinct damnations,
One sure, if another fails:
If I trip him just a-dying,
Sure of heaven as sure can be,
Spin him round and send him flying
Off to hell, a Manichee?⁴

Or, my scrofulous French novel
On gray paper with blunt type!
Simply glance at it, you grovel
Hand and foot in Belial's gripe:
If I double down its pages
At the woeful sixteenth print,
When he gathers his greengages,
Ope a sieve and slip it in't?

Or, there's Satan!—one might venture
Pledge one's soul to him, yet leave
Such a flaw in the indenture
As he'd miss till, past retrieve,
Blasted lay that rose-acacia
We're so proud of! *Hy, Zy, Hine. . .*
'St, there's Vespers! *Plena gratiâ,*
*Ave, Virgo!*⁵ Gr-r-r—you swine!

MY LAST DUCHESS⁶

FERRARA

THAT's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Fra Pandolf's⁷
hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I
said
"Fra Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts
by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)

³Probably Galatians, iii, 10, which refers to Deuteronomy, xxviii.

⁴Follower of the Persian Manes who maintained the existence of two supreme principles, light (good) and darkness (evil).

⁵Hail, Virgin, full of grace!

⁶Published in 1842. Ferrara is a town in northern Italy.

⁷Fra means brother. Pandolf is an imaginary artist—and monk—of the Renaissance.

¹Save you! (a salutation).

²One who holds with Arius (A. D. 256-336) that Christ is a created being, inferior to God the Father in nature and dignity.

And seemed as they would ask me, if they
durst,

How such a glance came there; so, not the
first

Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 't was not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek; perhaps

Fra Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle
laps

Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat": such
stuff

Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made
glad,

Too easily impressed: she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went every-
where.

Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and
each

Would draw from her alike the approving
speech,

Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good!
but thanked

Somehow—I know not how—as if she
ranked

My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to
blame

This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to make
your will

Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just
this

Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping; and I
choose

Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no
doubt,

Whene'er I passed her; but who passed
without

Much the same smile? This grew; I gave
commands;

Then all smiles stopped together. There she
stands

As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We'll
meet

The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretense
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck¹ cast in bronze for
me!

CRISTINA²

SHE should never have looked at me
If she meant I should not love her!
There are plenty . . . men, you call such,
I suppose . . . she may discover
All her soul to, if she pleases,
And yet leave much as she found them:
But I'm not so, and she knew it
When she fixed me, glancing round them.

What? To fix me thus meant nothing?
But I can't tell (there's my weakness)
What her look said!—no vile cant, sure,
About "need to strew the bleakness
Of some lone shore with its pearl-seed,
That the sea feels"—no "strange yearning
That such souls have, most to lavish
Where there's chance of least returning."

Oh, we're sunk enough here, God knows!
But not quite so sunk that moments,
Sure though seldom, are denied us,
When the spirit's true endowments
Stand out plainly from its false ones,
And apprise it if pursuing
Or the right way or the wrong way,
To its triumph or undoing.

There are flashes struck from midnights,
There are fire-flames noondays kindle,
Whereby piled-up honors perish,
Whereby swollen ambitions dwindle,
While just this or that poor impulse,
Which for once had play unstifled,
Seems the sole work of a lifetime,
That away the rest have trifled.

¹Like Pandolf, an imaginary artist.

²Published in 1842. The title was suggested by Maria Christina of Naples (1806-1878) who married King Ferdinand VII of Spain in 1829. She was a coquette and lived a dissolute life.

Doubt you if, in some such moment,
 As she fix'd me, she felt clearly,
 Ages past the soul existed,
 Here an age 'tis resting merely,
 And hence fleets again for ages,
 While the true end, sole and single,
 It stops here for is, this love-way,
 With some other soul to mingle?

Else it loses what it lived for,
 And eternally must lose it;
 Better ends may be in prospect,
 Deeper blisses (if you choose it),
 But this life's end and this love-bliss
 Have been lost here. Doubt you whether
 This she felt as, looking at me,
 Mine and her souls rushed together?

Oh, observe! Of course, 'next moment,
 The world's honors, in derision,
 Trampled out the light for ever:
 Never fear but there's provision
 Of the devil's to quench knowledge
 Lest we walk the earth in rapture!
 —Making those who catch God's secret
 Just so much more prize their capture!

Such am I: the secret 's mine now!
 She has lost me, I have gained her;
 Her soul's mine: and thus, grown perfect,
 I shall pass my life's remainder.
 Life will just hold out the proving
 Both our powers, alone and blended:
 And then, come the next life quickly!
 'This world's use will have been ended.

SAUL¹

I

SAID Abner,² "At last thou art come! Ere I
 tell, ere thou speak,
 Kiss my cheek, wish me well!" Then I
 wished it, and did kiss his cheek.
 And he: "Since the King, O my friend, for
 thy countenance sent,
 Neither drunken nor eaten have we; nor
 until from his tent
 Thou return with the joyful assurance the
 King liveth yet,

¹The first nine sections were published in 1845. The remaining sections were added when the poem was republished in 1855. The incident which served as the basis for the poem is to be found in 1 Samuel, xvi, 14-23.

²The captain of Saul's army.

Shall our lip with the honey be bright, with
 the water be wet.
 For out of the black mid-tent's silence, a
 space of three days,
 Not a sound hath escaped to thy servants, of
 prayer nor of praise,
 To betoken that Saul and the Spirit have
 ended their strife,
 And that, faint in his triumph, the monarch
 sinks back upon life.

II

"Yet now my heart leaps, O beloved! God's
 child with his dew
 On thy gracious gold hair, and those lilies still
 living and blue
 Just broken to twine round thy harp-strings,
 as if no wild heat
 Were now raging to torture the desert!"

III

Then I, as was meet,
 Knelt down to the God of my fathers, and
 rose on my feet,
 And ran o'er the sand burned to powder.
 The tent was unlooped;
 I pulled up the spear that obstructed, and
 under I stooped;
 Hands and knees on the slippery grass-patch,
 all withered and gone,
 That extends to the second enclosure, I
 groped my way on
 Till I felt where the foldskirts fly open.
 Then once more I prayed,
 And opened the foldskirts and entered, and
 was not afraid
 But spoke, "Here is David, thy servant!"
 And no voice replied.
 At the first I saw naught but the blackness:
 but soon I descried
 A something more black than the blackness
 —the vast, the upright
 Main prop which sustains the pavilion: and
 slow into sight
 Grew a figure against it, gigantic and
 blackest of all.
 Then a sunbeam, that burst through the
 tent-roof, showed Saul.

IV

He stood as erect as that tent-prop, both
 arms stretched out wide
 On the great cross-support in the center, that
 goes to each side;

He relaxed not a muscle, but hung there as,
 caught in his pangs
 And waiting his change, the king-serpent all
 heavily hangs,
 Far away from his kind, in the pine, till
 deliverance come
 With the spring-time,—so agonized Saul,
 drear and stark blind and dumb.

V

Then I turned my harp,—took off the lilies
 we twine round its chords
 Lest they snap 'neath the stress of the noon-
 tide—those sunbeams like swords!
 And I first played the tune all our sheep
 know, as, one after one,
 So docile they come to the pen-door till
 folding be done.
 They are white and untorn by the bushes,
 for lo, they have fed
 Where the long grasses stifle the water
 within the stream's bed;
 And now one after one seeks its lodging, as
 star follows star
 Into eve and the blue far above us,—so blue
 and so far!

VI

—Then the tune for which quails on the corn-
 land will each leave his mate
 To fly after the player; then, what makes the
 crickets elate
 Till for boldness they fight one another; and
 then, what has weight
 To set the quick jerboa¹ a-musing outside his
 sand-house—
 There are none such as he for a wonder, half
 bird and half mouse!
 God made all the creatures and gave them
 our love and our fear,
 To give sign, we and they are his children,
 one family here.

VII

Then I played the help-tune of our reapers,
 their wine-song, when hand
 Grasps at hand, eye lights eye in good
 friendship and great hearts expand
 And grow one in the sense of this world's life.
 —And then, the last song
 When the dead man is praised on his journey
 —“Bear, bear him along,

¹A small jumping rodent, sometimes called the jumping hare.

With his few faults shut up like dead
 flowerets! Are balm seeds not here
 To console us? The land has none left such
 as he on the bier.
 Oh, would we might keep thee, my brother!”
 —And then, the glad chaunt
 Of the marriage,—first go the young maidens,
 next, she whom we vaunt
 As the beauty, the pride of our dwelling.—
 And then, the great march
 Wherein man runs to man to assist him and
 buttress an arch
 Naught can break; who shall harm them, our
 friends? Then, the chorus intoned
 As the Levites go up to the altar in glory
 enthroned.
 But I stopped here: for here in the darkness
 Saul groaned.

VIII

And I paused, held my breath in such silence,
 and listened apart;
 And the tent shook, for mighty Saul shud-
 dered: and sparkles 'gan dart
 From the jewels that woke in his turban, at
 once with a start,
 All its lordly male-sapphires, and rubies
 courageous at heart.
 So the head: but the body still moved not,
 still hung there erect.
 And I bent once again to my playing, pur-
 sued it unchecked,
 As I sang:—

IX

“Oh, our manhood's prime vigor! No spirit
 feels waste,
 Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor
 sinew unbraced.
 Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping
 from rock up to rock,
 The strong rending of boughs from the fir-
 tree, the cool silver shock
 Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the
 hunt of the bear,
 And the sultriness showing the lion is
 couched in his lair.
 And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over
 with gold dust divine,
 And the locust-flesh steeped in the pitcher,
 the full draught of wine,
 And the sleep in the dried river-channel
 where bulrushes tell
 That the water was wont to go warbling so
 softly and well.

How good is man's life, the mere living!
 how fit to employ
 All the heart and the soul and the senses for
 ever in joy!
 Hast thou loved the white locks of thy
 father, whose sword thou didst guard
 When he trusted thee forth with the armies,
 for glorious reward?
 Didst thou see the thin hands of thy mother,
 held up as men sung
 The low song of the nearly-departed, and
 hear her faint tongue
 Joining in while it could to the witness, 'Let
 one more attest,
 I have lived, seen God's hand through a life-
 time, and all was for best'?
 Then they sung through their tears in strong
 triumph, not much, but the rest.
 And thy brothers, the help and the contest,
 the working whence grew
 Such result as, from seething grape-bundles,
 the spirit strained true:
 And the friends of thy boyhood—that boy-
 hood of wonder and hope,
 • Present promise and wealth of the future
 beyond the eye's scope,—
 Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch; a
 people is thine;
 And all gifts, which the world offers singly, on
 one head combine!
 On one head, all the beauty and strength,
 love and rage (like the throe
 That, a-work in the rock, helps its labor and
 'lets the gold go)
 High ambition and deeds which surpass it,
 fame crowning them,—all
 Brought to blaze on the head of one creature
 —King Saul!"

x

And lo, with that leap of my spirit,—heart,
 hand, harp and voice,
 Each lifting Saul's name out of sorrow, each
 bidding rejoice
 Saul's fame in the light it was made for—as
 when, dare I say,
 The Lord's army, in rapture of service,
 strains through its array,
 And upsoareth the cherubim-chariot—
 "Saul!" cried I, and stopped,
 And waited the thing that should follow.
 Then Saul, who hung propped
 By the tent's cross-support in the center, was
 struck by his name.

Have ye seen when Spring's arrowy summons
 goes right to the aim,
 And some mountain, the last to withstand
 her, that held (he alone,
 While the vale laughed in freedom and
 flowers) on a broad bust of stone
 A year's snow bound about for a breastplate,
 —leaves grasp of the sheet?
 Fold on fold all at once it crowds thunderous-
 ly down to his feet,
 And there fronts you, stark, black, but alive
 yet, your mountain of old,
 With his rents, the successive bequeathings
 of ages untold—
 Yea, each harm got in fighting your battles,
 each furrow and scar
 Of his head thrust 'twixt you and the tempest
 —all hail, there they are!
 —Now again to be softened with verdure,
 again hold the nest
 Of the dove, tempt the goat and its young to
 the green on his crest
 For their food in the ardors of summer. One
 long shudder thrilled
 All the tent till the very air tingled, then sank
 and was stilled
 At the King's self left standing before me,
 released and aware.
 What was gone, what remained? All to
 traverse 'twixt hope and despair,
 Death was past, life not come: so he waited.
 Awhile his right hand
 Held the brow, helped the eyes left too
 vacant forthwith to remand
 To their place what new objects should enter:
 'twas Saul as before.
 I looked up and dared gaze at those eyes,
 nor was hurt any more
 Than by slow pallid sunsets in autumn, ye
 watch from the shore,
 At their sad level gaze o'er the ocean—a sun's
 slow decline
 Over hills which, resolved in stern silence,
 o'erlap and entwine
 Base with base to knit strength more intense-
 ly: so, arm folded arm
 O'er the chest whose slow heavings subsided.

xi

What spell or what charm
 (For awhile there was trouble within me),
 what next should I urge
 To sustain him where song had restored him?
 —Song filled to the verge

His cup with the wine of this life, pressing
 all that it yields
 Of mere fruitage, the strength and the beauty:
 beyond, on what fields,
 Glean a vintage more potent and perfect to
 brighten the eye
 And bring blood to the lip, and commend
 them the cup they put by?
 He saith, "It is good"; still he drinks not:
 he lets me praise life,
 Gives assent, yet would die for his own part.

XII

Then fancies grew rife
 Which had come long ago on the pasture,
 when round me the sheep
 Fed in silence—above, the one eagle wheeled
 slow as in sleep;
 And I lay in my hollow and mused on the
 world that might lie
 'Neath his ken, though I saw but the strip
 'twixt the hill and the sky:
 And I laughed—"Since my days are ordained
 to be passed with my flocks,
 Let me people at least, with my fancies, the
 plains and the rocks,
 Dream the life I am never to mix with, and
 image the show
 Of mankind as they live in those fashions I
 hardly shall know!
 Schemes of life, its best rules and right uses,
 the courage that gains,
 And the prudence that keeps what men strive
 for." And now these old trains
 Of vague thought came again; I grew surer;
 so, once more the string
 Of my harp made response to my spirit, as
 thus—

XIII

"Yea, my King,"
 I began—"thou dost well in rejecting mere
 comforts that spring
 From the mere mortal life held in common by
 man and by brute:
 In our flesh grows the branch of this life, in
 our soul it bears fruit.
 Thou hast marked the slow rise of the tree,—
 how its stem trembled first
 Till it passed the kid's lip, the stag's antler;
 then safely outburst
 The fan-branches all round; and thou mind-
 est when these too, in turn,

Broke a-bloom and the palm-tree seemed
 perfect: yet more was to learn,
 E'en the good that comes in with the palm-
 fruit. Our dates shall we slight,
 When their juice brings a cure for all sorrow?
 or care for the plight
 Of the palm's self whose slow growth pro-
 duced them? Not so! stem and branch
 Shall decay, nor be known in their place,
 while the palm-wine shall stanch
 Every wound of man's spirit in winter. I
 pour thee such wine.
 Leave the flesh to the fate it was fit for! the
 spirit be thine!
 By the spirit, when age shall o'ercome thee,
 thou still shalt enjoy
 More indeed, than at first when unconscious,
 the life of a boy.
 Crush that life, and behold its wine running!
 Each deed thou hast done
 Dies, revives, goes to work in the world;
 until e'en as the sun
 Looking down on the earth, though clouds
 spoil him, though tempests efface,
 Can find nothing his own deed produced not,
 must everywhere trace
 The results of his past summer-prime,—so,
 each ray of thy will,
 Every flash of thy passion and prowess, long
 over, shall thrill
 Thy whole people, the countless, with ardor,
 till they too give forth
 A like cheer to their sons, who in turn, fill the
 South and the North
 With the radiance thy deed was the germ of.
 Carouse in the past!
 But the license of age has its limit; thou diest
 at last:
 As the lion when age dims his eyeball, the
 rose at her height,
 So with man—so his power and his beauty
 for ever take flight.
 No! Again a long draught of my soul-wine!
 Look forth o'er the years!
 Thou hast done now with eyes for the actual;
 begin with the seer's!
 Is Saul dead? In the depth of the vale make
 his tomb—bid arise
 A gray mountain of marble heaped four-
 square, till, built to the skies,
 Let it mark where the great First King
 slumbers: whose fame would ye know?
 Up above see the rock's naked face, where
 the record shall go

In great characters cut by the scribe,—Such
 was Saul, so he did;
 With the sages directing the work, by the
 populace chid,—
 For not half, they'll affirm, is comprised
 there! Which fault to amend,
 In the grove with his kind grows the cedar,
 whereon they shall spend
 (See, in tablets 'tis level before them) their
 praise, and record
 With the gold of the graver, Saul's story,—
 the statesman's great word
 Side by side with the poet's sweet comment.
 The river's a-wave
 With smooth paper-reeds grazing each other
 when prophet-winds rave:
 So the pen gives unborn generations their
 due and their part
 In thy being! Then, first of the mighty, thank
 God that thou art!"

XIV

And behold while I sang . . . but O Thou who
 didst grant me that day,
 And before it not seldom hast granted thy
 help to essay,
 Carry on and complete an adventure,—my
 shield and my sword
 In that act where my soul was thy servant,
 thy word was my word,—
 Still be with me, who then at the summit of
 human endeavor
 And scaling the highest, man's thought
 could, gazed hopeless as ever
 On the new stretch of heaven above me—till,
 mighty to save,
 Just one lift of thy hand cleared that
 distance—God's throne from man's
 grave!
 Let me tell out my tale to its ending—my
 voice to my heart
 Which can scarce dare believe in what mar-
 vels last night I took part,
 As this morning I gather the fragments,
 alone with my sheep,
 And still fear lest the terrible glory vanish
 like sleep!
 For I wake in the gray dewy covert, while
 Hebron¹ upheaves

¹One of the cities of refuge, the farthest south of
 those west of the Jordan. Browning seems to transfer
 the name to one of the surrounding mountains.

The dawn struggling with night on his
 shoulder, and Kidron² retrieves
 Slow the damage of yesterday's sunshine.

xv

I say then,—my song
 While I sang thus, assuring the monarch, and
 ever more strong
 Made a proffer of good to console him—he
 slowly resumed
 His old motions and habitudes kingly. The
 right hand replumed
 His black locks to their wonted composure,
 adjusted the swathes
 Of his turban, and see—the huge sweat that
 his countenance bathes,
 He wipes off with the robe; and he girds now
 his loins as of yore,
 And feels slow for the armlets of price, with
 the clasp set before.
 He is Saul, ye remember in glory,—ere error
 had bent
 The broad brow from the daily communion;
 and still, though much spent
 Be the life and the bearing that front you,
 the same, God did choose,
 To receive what a man may waste, desecrate,
 never quite lose.
 So sank he along by the tent-prop till, stayed
 by the pile
 Of his armor and war-cloak and garments, he
 leaned there awhile,
 And sat out my singing,—one arm round the
 tent-prop, to raise
 His bent head, and the other hung slack—till
 I touched on the praise
 I foresaw from all men in all time, to the man
 patient there;
 And thus ended, the harp falling forward.
 Then first I was 'ware
 That he sat, as I say, with my head just above
 his vast knees
 Which were thrust out on each side around
 me, like oak roots which please
 To encircle a lamb when it slumbers. I
 looked up to know
 If the best I could do had brought solace:
 he spoke not, but slow
 Lifted up the hand slack at his side, till he
 laid it with care
 Soft and grave, but in mild settled will, on
 my brow: through my hair

²A small stream close by Jerusalem.

The large fingers were pushed, and he bent
back my head, with kind power—
All my face back, intent to peruse it, as men
do a flower.
Thus held he me there with his great eyes
that scrutinized mine—
And oh, all my heart how it loved him! but
where was the sign?
I yearned—"Could I help thee, my father,
inventing a bliss,
I would add, to that life of the past, both the
future and this;
I would give thee new life altogether, as good,
ages hence,
As this moment,—had love but the warrant,
love's heart to dispense!"

XVI

Then the truth came upon me. No harp
more—no song more! outbroke—

XVII

"I have gone the whole round of creation: I
saw and I spoke:
I, a work of God's hand for that purpose,
received in my brain
And pronounced on the rest of his handwork
—returned him again
His creation's approval or censure: I spoke
as I saw:
I report, as a man may of God's work—all's
love, yet all's law.
Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me.
Each faculty tasked
To perceive him, has gained an abyss, where
a dewdrop was asked.
Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels
at Wisdom laid bare.
Have I forethought? how purblind, how
blank, to the Infinite Care!
Do I task any faculty highest, to image
success?
I but open my eyes,—and perfection, no
more and no less,
In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and
God is seen God
In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the
soul and the clod.
And thus looking within and around me, I
ever renew
(With that stoop of the soul which in bending
upraises it too)
The submission of man's nothing-perfect to
God's all-complete,

As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to
his feet.
Yet with all this abounding experience, this
deity known,
I shall dare to discover some province, some
gift of my own.
There's a faculty pleasant to exercise, hard
to hoodwink,
I am fain to keep still in abeyance (I laugh
as I think),
Lest, insisting to claim and parade in it, wot
ye, I worst
E'en the Giver in one gift.—Behold, I could
love if I durst!
But I sink the pretension as fearing a man
may o'ertake
God's own speed in the one way of love: I
abstain for love's sake.
—What, my soul? see thus far and no
farther? when doors great and small,
Nine-and-ninety flew ope at our touch,
should the hundredth appall?
In the least things have faith, yet distrust
in the greatest of all?
Do I find love so full in my nature, God's
ultimate gift,
That I doubt his own love can compete with
it? Here, the parts shift?
Here, the creature surpass the Creator,—the
end, what Began?
Would I fain in my impotent yearning do all
for this man,
And dare doubt he alone shall not help him,
who yet alone can?
Would it ever have entered my mind, the
bare will, much less power,
To bestow on this Saul what I sang of, the
marvelous dower
Of the life he was gifted and filled with? to
make such a soul,
Such a body, and then such an earth for in-
sphering the whole?
And doth it not enter my mind (as my warm
tears attest)
These good things being given, to go on, and
give one more, the best?
Ay, to save and redeem and restore him,
maintain at the height
This perfection,—succeed with life's day-
spring, death's minute of night?
Interpose at the difficult minute, snatch
Saul the mistake,
Saul the failure, the ruin he seems now,—and
bid him awake

From the dream, the probation, the prelude,
to find himself set
Clear and safe in new light and new life,—a
new harmony yet
To be run, and continued, and ended—who
knows?—or endure!
The man taught enough by life's dream, of
the rest to make sure;
By the pain-throb, triumphantly winning in-
tensified bliss,
And the next world's reward and repose, by
the struggles in this.

XVIII

"I believe it! 'Tis thou, God, that givest,
'tis I who receive:
In the first is the last, in thy will is my power
to believe.
All's one gift: thou canst grant it moreover,
as prompt to my prayer
As I breathe out this breath, as I open these
arms to the air.
From thy will stream the worlds, life and
nature, thy dread Sabaoth:¹
I will?—the mere atoms despise me! Why
am I not loath
To look that, even that in the face too?
Why is it I dare
Think but lightly of such impuissance?
What stops my despair?
This;—'tis not what man Does which exalts
him, but what man Would do!
See the King—I would help him but cannot,
the wishes fall through.
Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow,
grow poor to enrich,
To fill up his life, starve my own out, I
would—knowing which,
I know that my service is perfect. Oh,
speak through me now!
Would I suffer for him that I love? So
wouldst thou—so wilt thou!
So shall crown thee the topmost, ineffablest,
uttermost crown—
And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave
up nor down
One spot for the creature to stand in! It is
by no breath,
Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation
joins issue with death!
As thy Love is discovered almighty, almighty
be proved

Thy power, that exists with and for it, of
being Beloved!
He who did most, shall bear most; the
strongest shall stand the most weak.
'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for!
my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O
Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a
Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, for ever: a
Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee!
See the Christ stand!"

XIX

I know not too well how I found my way
home in the night.
There were witnesses, cohorts about me, to
left and to right,
Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the
alive, the aware:
I repressed, I got through them as hardly, as
strugglingly there,
As a runner beset by the populace famished
for news—
Life or death. The whole earth was awakened,
hell loosed with her crews;
And the stars of night beat with emotion,
and tingled and shot
Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowledge:
but I fainted not,
For the Hand still impelled me at once and
supported, suppressed
All the tumult, and quenched it with quiet,
and holy behest,
Till the rapture was shut in itself, and the
earth sank to rest.
Anon at the dawn, all that trouble had with-
ered from earth—
Not so much, but I saw it die out in the day's
tender birth;
In the gathered intensity brought to the gray
of the hills;
In the shuddering forests' held breath; in the
sudden wind-thrills;
In the startled wild beasts that bore off, each
with eye sidling still
Though averted with wonder and dread; in
the birds stiff and chill
That rose heavily, as I approached them,
made stupid with awe:
E'en the serpent that slid away silent,—he
felt the new law.

¹Hosts.

The same stared in the white humid faces
 upturned by the flowers;
 The same worked in the heart of the cedar
 and moved the vine-bowers:
 And the little brooks witnessing murmured,
 persistent and low,
 With their obstinate, all but hushed voices—
 "E'en so, it is so!"

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS¹

WHERE the quiet-colored end of evening
 smiles
 Miles and miles
 On the solitary pastures where our sheep
 Half-asleep
 Tinkle homeward through the twilight, stray
 or stop
 As they crop—
 Was the site once of a city great and gay,
 (So they say)
 Of our country's very capital, its prince
 Ages since
 Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding
 far
 Peace or war.

Now,—the country does not even boast a
 tree,
 As you see,
 To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills
 From the hills
 Intersect and give a name to (else they run
 Into one),
 Where the domed and daring palace shot its
 spires
 Up like fires
 O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
 Bounding all,
 Made of marble, men might march on nor be
 pressed,
 Twelve abreast.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass
 Never was!
 Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'er-
 spreads
 And embeds
 Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
 Stock or stone—
 Where a multitude of men breathed joy and
 woe
 Long ago;

Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread
 of shame
 Struck them tame;
 And that glory and that shame alike, the gold
 Bought and sold.

Now,—the single little turret that remains
 On the plains,
 By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
 Overscored,
 While the patching houseleek's head of
 blossom winks
 Through the chinks—
 Marks the basement whence a tower in
 ancient time
 Sprang sublime,
 And a burning ring, all round, the chariots
 traced
 As they raced,
 And the monarch and his minions and his
 dames
 Viewed the games.

And I know, while thus the quiet-colored eve
 Smiles to leave
 To their folding, all our many-tinkling fleece
 In such peace,
 And the slopes and rills in undistinguished
 gray
 Melt away—
 That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair
 Waits me there
 In the turret whence the charioteers caught
 soul
 For the goal,
 When the king looked, where she looks now,
 breathless, dumb
 Till I come.

But he looked upon the city, every side,
 Far and wide,
 All the mountains topped with temples, all
 the glades'
 Colonnades,
 All the causeys,² bridges, aqueducts,—and
 then,
 All the men!
 When I do come, she will speak not, she will
 stand,
 Either hand
 On my shoulder, give her eyes the first
 embrace
 Of my face,

¹Published in 1855.

²Causeways.

Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and
speech
Each on each.

*In one year they sent a million fighters forth
South and North,
And they built their gods a brazen pillar high
As the sky,
Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full
force—
Gold, of course.
Oh heart! oh blood that freezes, blood that
burns!
Earth's returns
For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin!
Shut them in
With their triumphs and their glories and the
rest!
Love is best.

UP AT A VILLA—DOWN IN THE CITY¹

(AS DISTINGUISHED BY AN ITALIAN PERSON
OF QUALITY)

HAD I but plenty of money, money enough
and to spare,
The house for me, no doubt, were a house in
the city-square;
Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the
window there!

Something to see, by Bacchus, something to
hear, at least!
There, the whole day long, one's life is a per-
fect feast;
While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it, no
more than a beast.

Well now, look at our villa! stuck like the
horn of a bull
Just on a mountain-edge as bare as the
creature's skull,
Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a leaf
to pull!
—I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if the
hair's turned wool.

But the city, oh the city—the square with
the houses! Why?
They are stone-faced, white as a curd there's
something to take the eye!

Houses in four straight lines, not a single
front awry;
You watch who crosses and gossips, who
saunters, who hurries by;
Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw
when the sun gets high;
And the shops with fanciful signs which are
painted properly.

What of a villa? Though winter be over in
March by rights,
'Tis May perhaps ere the snow shall have
withered well off the heights:
You've the brown ploughed land before,
where the oxen steam and wheeze,
And the hills over-smoked behind by the
faint gray olive-trees.

Is it better in May, I ask you? You've
summer all at once;
In a day he leaps complete with a few strong
April suns.
'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce
risen three fingers well,
The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out
its great red bell
Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the
children to pick and sell.

Is it ever hot in the square? There's a
fountain to spout and splash!
In the shade it sings and springs; in the shine
such foambows flash
On the horses with curling fish-tails, that
prance and paddle and pash
Round the lady atop in her conch—fifty
gazers do not abash,
Though all that she wears is some weeds
round her waist in a sort of sash.

All the year long at the villa, nothing to see
though you linger,
Except yon cypress that points like death's
lean lifted forefinger.
Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix i'
the corn and mingle,
Or thrid² the stinking hemp till the stalks of
it seem a-tingle.
Late August or early September, the stun-
ning cicala is shrill,
And the bees keep their tiresome whine round
the resinous firs on the hill.
Enough of the seasons,—I spare you the
months of the fever and chill.

¹Published in 1855.

²Thread.

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the
blessed church-bells begin:
No sooner the bells leave off than the dili-
gence rattles in:
You get the pick of the news, and it costs you
never a pin.
By and by there's the traveling doctor gives
pills, lets blood, draws teeth;
Or the Pulcinello-trumpet¹ breaks up the
market beneath.
At the post-office such a scene-picture—the
new play, piping hot!
And a notice how, only this morning, three
liberal thieves² were shot.
Above it, behold the Archbishop's most
fatherly of rebukes,
And beneath, with his crown and his lion,
some little new law of the Duke's!
Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the
Reverend Don So-and-so,
Who is³ Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca, Saint
Jerome, and Cicero,
"And moreover," (the sonnet goes rhym-
ing) "the skirts of Saint Paul has reached,
Having preached us those six Lent-lectures
more unctuous than ever he preached."
Noon strikes,—here sweeps the procession!
our Lady borne smiling and smart
With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and
seven swords stuck in her heart!⁴
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-
tootle* the fife;
No keeping one's haunches still: it's the
greatest pleasure in life.

But bless you, it's dear—it's dear! fowls,
wine, at double the rate.
They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and
what oil pays passing the gate⁵
It's a horror to think of. And so, the villa
for me, not the city!
Beggars can scarcely be choosers: but still
—ah, the pity, the pity!

Look, two and two go the priests, then the
monks with cowls and sandals,
And the penitents dressed in white shirts,
a-holding the yellow candles;
One, he carries a flag up straight, and another
a cross with handles,
And the Duke's guard brings up the rear, for
the better prevention of scandals:
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-
tootle* the fife.
Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no such
pleasure in life!

THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER⁶

I SAID—Then, dearest, since 'tis so,
Since now at length my fate I know,
Since nothing all my love avails,
Since all, my life seemed meant for, fails,
Since this was written and needs must be
My whole heart rises up to bless
Your name in pride and thankfulness!
Take back the hope you gave,—I claim
Only a memory of the same,
—And this beside, if you will not blame,
Your leave for one more last ride with me.

My mistress bent that brow of hers;
Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs
When pity would be softening through,
Fixed me a breathing-while or two
With life or death in the balance: right!
The blood replenished me again;
My last thought was at least not vain:
I and my mistress, side by side
Shall be together, breathe and ride,
So, one day more am I deified.
Who knows but the world may end to-
night?

Hush! if you saw some western cloud
All billowy-bosomed, over-bowed
By many benedictions—sun's
And moon's and evening-star's at once—
And so, you, looking and loving best,
Conscious grew, your passion drew
Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too,
Down on you, near and yet more near,
Till flesh must fade for heaven was here!—
Thus leant she and lingered—joy and fear!
Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

⁶Published in 1855.

¹The trumpet announcing a Punch-and-Judy show.

²*I.e.*, those executed were republicans, and "thieves" indicates the "person of quality's" attitude towards those whose politics differed from his.

³*I.e.*, rivals.

⁴The swords symbolize the Seven Sorrows of our Lady—the Virgin Mary.

⁵*I.e.*, what tax has to be paid when it is brought into the city.

Then we began to ride. My soul
Smoothed itself out, a long-cramped scroll
Freshening and fluttering in the wind.
Past hopes already lay behind.

What need to strive with a life awry?
Had I said that, had I done this,
So might I gain, so might I miss.
Might she have loved me? just as well
She might have hated, who can tell!
Where had I been now if the worst befell?
And here we are riding, she and I.

Fail I alone, in words and deeds?
Why, all men strive, and who succeeds?
We rode; it seemed my spirit flew,
Saw other regions, cities new,
As the world rushed by on either side.
I thought,—All labor, yet no less
Bear up beneath their unsuccess.
Look at the end of work, contrast
The petty done, the undone vast,
This present of theirs with the hopeful past!
I hoped she would love me; here we ride.

What hand and brain went ever paired?
What heart alike conceived and dared?
What act proved all its thought had been?
What will but felt the fleshly screen?

We ride and I see her bosom heave.
There's many a crown for who can reach.
Ten lines,¹ a statesman's life in each!
The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
A soldier's doing! what atones?
They scratch his name on the Abbey-stones.²
My riding is better, by their leave.

What does it all mean, poet? Well,
Your brains beat into rhythm, you tell
What we felt only; you expressed
You hold things beautiful the best,
And place them in rhyme so, side by side.
'Tis something, nay 'tis much: but then,
Have you yourself what's best for men?
Are you—poor, sick, old ere your time—
Nearer one whit your own sublime
Than we who never have turned a rhyme?
Sing, riding's a joy! For me, I ride.

And you, great sculptor—so, you gave
A score of years to Art, her slave,
And that's your Venus, whence we turn
To yonder girl that fords the burn!

¹I.e., of history.

²At Westminster.

You acquiesce, and shall I repine?
What, man of music, you grown gray
With notes and nothing else to say,
Is this your sole praise from a friend,
"Greatly his opera's strains intend,
But in music we know how fashions end!"
I gave my youth; but we ride, in fine.

Who knows what's fit for us? Had fate
Proposed bliss here should sublimate
My being—had I signed the bond—
Still one must lead some life beyond,
Have a bliss to die with, dim-described.
This foot once planted on the goal,
This glory-garland round my soul,
Could I descry such? Try and test!
I sink back shuddering from the quest.
Earth being so good, would heaven seem best?
Now, heaven and she are beyond this ride.

And yet—she has not spoke so long!
What if heaven be that, fair and strong
At life's best, with our eyes upturned
Whither life's flower is first discerned,

We, fixed so, ever should so abide?
What if we still ride on, we two,
With life for ever old yet new,
Changed not in kind but in degree,
The instant made eternity,—
And heaven just prove that I and she
Ride, ride together, for ever ride?

RESPECTABILITY³

DEAR, had the world in its caprice
Deigned to proclaim "I know you both,
Have recognized your plighted troth,
Am sponsor for you: live in peace!"—
How many precious months and years
Of youth had passed, that speed so fast,
Before we found it out at last,
The world, and what it fears!

How much of priceless life were spent
With men that every virtue decks,
And women models of their sex,
Society's true ornament,—
Ere we dared wander, nights like this,
Through wind and rain, and watch the
Seine,
And feel the Boulevard break again
To warmth and light and bliss!

³Published in 1855.

I know! the world proscribes not love;
 Allows my finger to caress
 Your lips' contour and downiness,
 Provided it supply a glove.
 The world's good word!—the Institute!
 Guizot receives Montalembert!¹
 Eh? Down the court three lampions² flare:
 Put forward your best foot!

THE STATUE AND THE BUST³

THERE'S a palace in Florence, the world
 knows well,
 And a statue watches it from the square,⁴
 And this story of both do our townsmen tell.

Ages ago, a lady there,
 At the farthest window facing the East
 Asked, "Who rides by with the royal air?"

¹The glove is the body of accepted social conventions. The French Institute symbolizes the rewards of conventionality. Guizot as a liberal hated ultramontanism, represented by Montalembert, but, the latter keeping within the bounds of conventionality, the former welcomed him into the Institute.

²Small lamps.

³Published in 1855. The following inquiry was once sent to an American newspaper:

"1. When, how, and where did it happen? Browning's divine vagueness lets one gather only that the lady's husband was a Riccardi. 2. Who was the lady? who the duke? 3. The magnificent house wherein Florence lodges her *préfet* is known to all Florentine ball-goers as the Palazzo Riccardi. It was bought by the Riccardi from the Medici in 1659. From none of its windows did the lady gaze at her more than royal lover. From what window, then, if from any? Are the statue and the bust still in their original positions?"

These questions were found by Mr. Thomas J. Wise, who sent them to Browning. He received from Browning the following reply, written on 8 January, 1887:

"DEAR MR. WISE,—I have seldom met with such a strange inability to understand what seems the plainest matter possible: 'ball-goers' are probably not history-readers, but any guide-book would confirm what is sufficiently stated in the poem. I will append a note or two, however. 1. 'This story the townsmen tell,' 'when, how, and where,' constitutes the subject of the poem. 2. The lady was the wife of Riccardi; and the duke, Ferdinand, just as the poem says. 3. As it was built by, and inhabited by, the Medici till sold, long after, to the Riccardi, it was not from the duke's palace, but a window in that of the Riccardi, that the lady gazed at her lover riding by. The statue is still in its place, looking at the window under which 'now is the empty shrine.' Can anything be clearer? My 'vagueness' leaves what to be 'gathered' when all these things are put down in black and white? Oh, 'ball-goers'!"

⁴The Piazza della Annunziata. The statue is of the Grand Duke Ferdinand I.

The bridesmaids' prattle around her ceased;
 She leaned forth, one on either hand;
 They saw how the blush of the bride increased—

They felt by its beats her heart expand—
 As one at each ear and both in a breath
 Whispered, "The Great-Duke Ferdinand."

That selfsame instant, underneath,
 The Duke rode past in his idle way,
 Empty and fine like a swordless sheath.

Gay he rode, with a friend as gay,
 Till he threw his head back—"Who is she?"
 —"A bride the Riccardi brings home to-day."

Hair in heaps lay heavily
 Over a pale brow spirit-pure—
 Carved like the heart of the coal-black tree,

Crisped like a war-steed's encolure—⁵
 And vainly sought to dissemble her eyes
 Of the blackest black our eyes endure,

And lo, a blade for a knight's emprise
 Filled the fine empty sheath of a man,—
 The Duke grew straightway brave and wise,

He looked at her, as a lover can;
 She looked at him, as one who awakes:
 The past was a sleep, and her life began.

Now, love so ordered for both their sakes,
 A feast was held that selfsame night
 In the pile which the mighty shadow makes.⁶

(For Via Larga is three-parts light,
 But the palace overshadows one,
 Because of a crime, which may God requite!)

To Florence and God the wrong was done,
 Through the first republic's murder there
 By Cosimo⁷ and his curséd son.)

The Duke (with the statue's face in the
 square)
 Turned in the midst of his multitude
 At the bright approach of the bridal pair.

⁵Neck and shoulders.

⁶The Palace of Ferdinand.

⁷Cosimo de' Medici (1389-1464). Through him Florence prospered, while its republican government was undermined. He built the palace later occupied by Ferdinand.

Face to face the lovers stood
A single minute and no more,
While the bridegroom bent as a man subdued—

Bowed till his bonnet brushed the floor—
For the Duke on the lady a kiss conferred,
As the courtly custom was of yore.

In a minute can lovers exchange a word?
If a word did pass, which I do not think,
Only one out of a thousand heard.

That was the bridegroom. At day's brink
He and his bride were alone at last
In a bed chamber by a taper's blink.

Calmly he said that her lot was cast,
That the door she had passed was shut on
her
Till the final catafalk¹ repassed.

The world meanwhile, its noise and stir,
Through a certain window facing the East
She could watch like a convent's chronicler.

Since passing the door might lead to a feast,
And a feast might lead to so much beside,
He, of many evils, chose the least.

"Freely I choose too," said the bride—
"Your window and its world suffice,"
Replied the tongue, while the heart replied—

"If I spend the night with that devil twice,
May his window serve as my loop of hell
Whence a damned soul looks on paradise!

"I fly to the Duke who loves me well,
Sit by his side and laugh at sorrow
Ere I count another ave-bell.

"'Tis only the coat of a page to borrow,
And tie my hair in a horse-boy's trim.
And I save my soul—but not to-morrow"—

(She checked herself and her eye grew dim)
"My father tarries to bless my state:
I must keep it one day more for him.

"Is one day more so long to wait?
Moreover the Duke rides past, I know;
We shall see each other, sure as fate."

¹Funeral canopy.

She turned on her side and slept. Just so!
So we resolve on a thing and sleep:
So did the lady, ages ago.

That night the Duke said, "Dear or cheap
As the cost of this cup of bliss may prove
To body or soul, I will drain it deep."

And on the morrow, bold with love,
He beckoned the bridegroom (close on call,
As his duty bade, by the Duke's alcove)

And smiled " 'Twas a very funeral,
Your lady will think, this feast of ours,—
A shame to efface, whate'er befall!

"What if we break from the Arno bowers,
And try if Petraja,² cool and green,
Cure last night's fault with this morning's
flowers?"

The bridegroom, not a thought to be seen
On his steady brow and quiet mouth,
Said, "Too much favor for me so mean!

"But, alas! my lady leaves the South;³
Each wind that comes from the Apennine
Is a menace to her tender youth:

"Nor a way exists, the wise opine,
If she quits her palace twice this year,
To avert the flower of life's decline."

Quoth the Duke, "A sage and a kindly fear.
Moreover Petraja is cold this spring:
Be our feast to-night as usual here!"

And then to himself—"Which night shall
bring
Thy bride to her lover's embraces, fool—
Or I am the fool, and thou art the king!

"Yet my passion must wait a night, nor
cool—
For to-night the Envoy arrives from France
Whose heart I unlock with thyself, my tool.

"I need thee still and might miss perchance.
To-day is not wholly lost, beside,
With its hope of my lady's countenance:

²Outside of Florence. The Arno is a river flowing through Florence.

³*I. e.*, is from the South. Apennine is the mountain range amidst which Florence is situated.

"For I ride—what should I do but ride?
And passing her palace, if I list,
May glance at its window—well betide!"

So said, so done: nor the lady missed
One ray that broke from the ardent brow,
Nor a curl of the lips where the spirit kissed.

Be sure that each renewed the vow,
No morrow's sun should arise and set
And leave them then as it left them now.

But next day passed, and next day yet,
With still fresh cause to wait one day more
Ere each leaped over the parapet.

And still, as love's brief morning wore,
With a gentle start, half smile, half sigh,
They found love not as it seemed before.

They thought it would work infallibly,
But not in despite of heaven and earth:
The rose would blow when the storm passed
by.

Meantime they could profit in winter's
dearth

By store of fruits that supplant the rose:
The world and its ways have a certain worth:

And to press a point while these oppose
Were simple¹ policy; better wait:
We lose no friends and we gain no foes.

Meantime, worse fates than a lover's fate,
Who daily may ride and pass and look
Where his lady watches behind the grate!

And she—she watched the square like a book
Holding one picture and only one,
Which daily to find she undertook:

When the picture was reached the book was
done,

And she turned from the picture at night to
scheme

Of tearing it out for herself next sun.

So weeks grew months, years; gleam by
gleam

The glory dropped from their youth and love,
And both perceived they had dreamed a
dream;

¹Silly.

Which hovered as dreams do, still above:
But who can take a dream for a truth?
Oh, hide our eyes from the next remove!

One day as the lady saw her youth
Depart, and the silver thread that streaked
Her hair, and, worn by the serpent's tooth,

The brow so puckered, the chin so peaked,—
And wondered who the woman was,
Hollow-eyed and haggard-cheeked,

Fronting her silent in the glass—
"Summon here," she suddenly said,
"Before the rest of my old self pass,

"Him, the Carver, a hand to aid,
Who fashions the clay no love will change,
And fixes a beauty never to fade.

"Let Robbia's craft² so apt and strange
Arrest the remains of young and fair,
And rivet them while the seasons range.

"Make me a face on the window there,
Waiting as ever, mute the while,
My love to pass below in the square!

"And let me think that it may beguile
Dreary days which the dead must spend
Down in their darkness under the aisle,

"To say, 'What matters it at the end?
I did no more while my heart was warm
Than does that image, my pale-faced friend.'

"Where is the use of the lip's red charm,
The heaven of hair, the pride of the brow,
And the blood that blues the inside arm—

"Unless we turn, as the soul knows how,
The earthly gift to an end divine?
A lady of clay is as good, I trow."

But long ere Robbia's cornice, fine,
With flowers and fruits which leaves enlace,
Was set where now is the empty shrine—

(And, leaning out of a bright blue space,
As a ghost might lean from a chink of sky,
The passionate pale lady's face—

²Robbia is not here the name of the artist (the last famous Robbia had died in 1566), but is applied to the kind of work done by the Robbias—terra-cotta relief work covered with enamel.

Eying ever, with earnest eye
And quick-turned neck at its breathless
stretch,
Some one who ever is passing by—)

The Duke had sighed like the simplest wretch
In Florence, "Youth—my dream escapes!
Will its record stay?" And he bade them
fetch

Some subtle molder of brazen shapes—
"Can the soul, the will, die out of a man
Ere his body find the grave that gapes?

"John of Douay shall effect my plan,
Set me on horseback here aloft,
Alive, as the crafty sculptor can,

"In the very square I have crossed so oft:
That men may admire, when future suns
Shall touch the eyes to a purpose soft,

"While the mouth and the brow stay brave
in bronze—

• Admire and say, 'When he was alive
How he would take his pleasure once!'

"And it shall go hard but I contrive
To listen the while, and laugh in my tomb
At idleness which aspires to strive."

So! While these wait the trump of doom,
How do their spirits pass, I wonder,
Nights and days in the narrow room?

Still, I suppose, they sit and ponder
What a gift life was, ages ago,
Six steps out of the chapel yonder.

Only they see not God, I know,
Nor all that chivalry of his,
The soldier-saints who, row on row,

Burn upward each to his point of bliss—
Since, the end of life being manifest,
He had burned his way through the world to
this.

I hear you reproach, "But delay was best,
For their end was a crime."—Oh, a crime
will do

As well, I reply, to serve for a test,

As a virtue golden through and through,
Sufficient to vindicate itself
And prove its worth at a moment's view!

Must a game be played for the sake of pelf?
Where a button goes, 'twere an epigram
To offer the stamp of the very Guelph.¹

The true has no value beyond the sham:
As well the counter as coin, I submit,
When your table's a hat, and your prize, a
dram.

Stake your counter as boldly every whit,
Venture as warily, use the same skill,
Do your best, whether winning or losing it,

If you chose to play!—is my principle.
Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life's set prize, be it what it will!

The counter our lovers staked was lost
As surely as if it were lawful coin:
And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost

Is—the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,
Though the end in sight was a vice, I say.
You of the virtue (we issue join)
How strive you? *De te, fabula!*²

THE PATRIOT³

AN OLD STORY

IT WAS roses, roses, all the way,
With myrtle mixed in my path like mad:
The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,
The church-spires flamed, such flags they
had,
A year ago on this very day.

The air broke into a mist with bells,
The old walls rocked with the crowd and
cries.
Had I said, "Good folk, mere noise repels—
But give me your sun from yonder skies!"
They had answered, "And afterward, what
else?"

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun
To give it my loving friends to keep!
Naught man could do, have I left undone:
And you see my harvest, what I reap
This very day, now a year is run.

¹Where a button will pass as readily as real money
("the stamp of the very Guelph") it would be absurd
("an epigram," *i.e.*, a matter for satire) to use the
latter.

²The story concerns you.

³Published in 1855.

There's nobody on the house-tops now—
 Just a palsied few at the windows set;
 For the best of the sight is, all allow,
 At the Shambles' Gate—or, better yet,
 By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,
 A rope cuts both my wrists behind;
 And I think, by the feel, my forehead bleeds,
 For they fling, whoever has a mind,
 Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

Thus I entered, and thus I go!
 In triumphs, people have dropped down
 dead.
 "Paid by the world, what dost thou owe
 Me?"—God might question; now instead,
 'Tis God shall repay: I am safer so.

FRA LIPPO LIPPI¹

I AM poor brother Lippo, by your leave!
 You need not clap your torches to my face.
 Zooks, what's to blame? you think you see
 a monk!

What, 'tis past midnight, and you go the
 rounds,

And here you catch me at an alley's end
 Where sportive ladies leave their doors ajar?
 The Carmine's my cloister:² hunt it up,
 Do,—harry out if you must show your zeal,
 Whatever rat, there, haps on his wrong hole,
 And nip each softling of a wee white mouse,
Weke, weke, that's crept to keep him company!

Aha, you know your betters! Then, you'll
 take

Your hand away that's fiddling on my throat,
 And please to know me likewise. Who am I?
 Why one, sir, who is lodging with a friend
 Three streets off—he's a certain . . . how d'ye
 call?

Master—a . . . Cosimo of the Medici,³
 I' the house that caps the corner. Boh! you
 were best!

Remember and tell me, the day you're
 hanged,

¹Published in 1855. Filippo Lippi's life (1406?–1469) is to be found in Vasari's *Lives of the Painters*.

²The monastery of the friars Del Carmine.

³Cosimo de' Medici (1389–1464), who built "the house that caps the corner" in 1430. The time of the poem is between that year and 1432, when Fra Lippo left his monastery.

How you affected such a gullet's-gripe!
 But you, sir, it concerns you that your
 knaves

Pick up a manner nor discredit you:
 Zooks, are we pilchards, that they sweep the
 streets

And count fair prize what comes into their
 net?

He's Judas to a tittle, that man is!
 Just such'a face! Why, sir, you make amends.
 Lord, I'm not angry! Bid your hangdogs go
 Drink out this quarter-florin to the health
 Of the munificent House that harbors me
 (And many more beside, lads! more beside!)
 And all's come square again. I'd like his
 face—

His, elbowing on his comrade in the door
 With the pike and lantern,—for the slave
 that holds

John Baptist's head a-dangle by the hair
 With one hand ("Look you, now," as who
 should say)

And his weapon in the other, yet unwiped!
 It's not your chance to have a bit of chalk,
 A wood-coal or the like? or you should see!
 Yes, I'm the painter, since you style me so.
 What, brother Lippo's doings, up and down,
 You know them and they take you? like
 enough!

I saw the proper twinkle in your eye—
 'Tell you, I liked your looks at very first.
 Let's sit and set things straight now, hip to
 haunch.

Here's spring come, and the nights one makes
 up bands

To roam the town and sing out carnival,
 And I've been three weeks shut within my
 mew,

A-painting for the great man, saints and
 saints

And saints again. I could not paint all
 night—

Ouf! I leaned out of window for fresh air.
 There came a hurry of feet and little feet,
 A sweep of lute-strings, laughs, and whiffs of
 song,—

*Flower o' the broom,
 Take away love, and our earth is a tomb!*

*Flower o' the quince,
 I let Lisa go, and what good in life since?
 Flower o' the thyme⁴—and so on. Round they
 went.*

⁴This and the following flower-songs are modeled on the *stornelli* sung by the peasants of Tuscany.

Scarce had they turned the corner when a titter

Like the skipping of rabbits by moonlight,—
three slim shapes,

And a face that looked up . . . zooks, sir,
flesh and blood,

That's all I'm made of! Into shreds it went,
Curtain and counterpane and coverlet,
All the bed-furniture—a dozen knots,
There was a ladder! Down I let myself,
Hands and feet, scrambling somehow, and
so dropped,

And after them. I came up with the fun
Hard by Saint Laurence,¹ hail fellow, well
met,—

Flower o' the rose,

If I've been merry, what matter who knows?

And so as I was stealing back again

To get to bed and have a bit of sleep

Ere I rise up to-morrow and go work

On Jerome knocking at his poor old breast

With his great round stone to subdue the
flesh,

• You snap me of the sudden. Ah, I see!

Though your eye twinkles still, you shake
your head—

Mine's shaved—a monk, you say—the sting's
in that!

If Master Cosimo announced himself,

Mum's the word naturally; but a monk!

Come, what am I a beast for? tell us, now!

I was a baby when my mother died

And father died and left me in the street.

I starved there, God knows how, a year or
two

On fig-skins, melon-parings, rinds and shucks,

Refuse and rubbish. One fine frosty day,

My stomach being empty as your hat,

The wind doubled me up and down I went.

Old Aunt Lapaccia trussed me with one
hand

(Its fellow was a stinger as I knew),

And so along the wall, over the bridge,

By the straight cut to the convent. Six words
there,

While I stood munching my first bread that
month:

"So, boy, you're minded," quoth the good
fat father,

Wiping his own mouth, 'twas refection-
time,—

"To quit this very miserable world?

Will you renounce" . . . "the mouthful of
bread?" thought I;

By no means! Brief, they made a monk of
me;

I did renounce the world, its pride and greed,
Palace, farm, villa, shop, and banking-house,
Trash, such as these poor devils of Medici
Have given their hearts to—all at eight years
old.

Well, sir, I found in time, you may be sure,
'Twas not for nothing—the good bellyful,
The warm serge and the rope that goes all
round,

And day-long blessed idleness beside!

"Let's see what the urchin's fit for"—that
came next.

Not overmuch their way, I must confess.

Such a to-do! They tried me with their
books;

Lord, they'd have taught me Latin in pure
waste!

Flower o' the clove,

All the Latin I construe is "amo," I love!

But, mind you, when a boy starves in the
streets

Eight years together, as my fortune was,
Watching folk's faces to know who will fling
The bit of half-stripped grape-bunch he
desires,

And who will curse or kick him for his
pains,—

Which gentleman processional and fine,

Holding a candle to the Sacrament,

Will wink and let him lift a plate and catch

The droppings of the wax to sell again,

Or holla for the Eight² and have him
whipped,—

How say I?—nay, which dog bites, which
lets drop

His bone from the heap of offal in the street,—

Why, soul and sense of him grow sharp alike,

He learns the look of things, and none the less

For admonition from the hunger-pinch.

I had a store of such remarks, be sure,

Which, after I found leisure, turned to use.

I drew men's faces on my copy-books,

Scrawled them within the antiphony's³

marge,

Joined legs and arms to the long music-notes,

Found eyes and nose and chin for A's and
B's,

²The magistrates who governed Florence.

³The Roman service-book.

¹The church of San Lorenzo.

And made a string of pictures of the world
Betwixt the ins and outs of verb and noun,
On the wall, the bench, the door. The
monks looked black.

"Nay," quoth the Prior, "turn him out,
d'ye say?"

In no wise. Lose a crow and catch a lark.
What if at last we get our man of parts,
We Carmelites, like those Camaldolese
And Preaching Friars,¹ to do our church up
fine

And put the front on it that ought to be!"
And hereupon he bade me daub away.

Thank you! my head being crammed, the
walls a blank,

Never was such prompt disemburdening.

First, every sort of monk, the black and
white,

I drew them, fat and lean: then, folk at
church,

From good old gossips waiting to confess
Their cribs of barrel-droppings, candle-ends,—
To the breathless fellow at the altar-foot,
Fresh from his murder, safe and sitting there
With the little children round him in a row
Of admiration, half for his beard and half
For that white anger of his victim's son
Shaking a fist at him with one fierce arm,
Signing himself with the other because of
Christ

(Whose sad face on the cross sees only this
After the passion of a thousand years)
Till some poor girl, her apron o'er her head,
(Which the intense eyes looked through)
came at eve

On tiptoe, said a word, dropped in a loaf,
Her pair of earrings and a bunch of flowers
(The brute took growling), prayed, and so
was gone.

I painted all, then cried " 'Tis ask and have;
Choose, for more's ready!"—laid the ladder
flat,

And showed my covered bit of cloister-wall.
The monks closed in a circle and praised loud
Till checked, taught what to see and not to
see,

Being simple bodies,—“That's the very man!
Look at the boy who stoops to pat the
dog!

That woman's like the Prior's niece who
comes

To care about his asthma: it's the life!"

But there my triumph's straw-fire flared and
funked;

Their betters took their turn to see and say:
The Prior and the learned pulled a face . . .
And stopped all that in no time. "How?
what's here?"

Quite from the mark of painting, bless us all!
Faces, arms, legs, and bodies like the true
As much as pea and pea! it's devil's game!
Your business is not to catch men with show,
With homage to the perishable clay,
But lift them over it, ignore it all,
Make them forget there's such a thing as
flesh.

Your business is to paint the souls of men—
Man's soul, and it's a fire, smoke . . . no, it's
not . . .

It's vapor done up like a new-born babe—
(In that shape when you die it leaves your
mouth)

It's . . . well, what matters talking, it's the
soul!

Give us no more of body than shows soul!
Here's Giotto,² with his Saint a-praising God,
That sets us praising,—why not stop with
him?

Why put all thoughts of praise out of our
head

With wonder at lines, colors, and what not?
Paint the soul, never mind the legs and arms!
Rub all out, try at it a second time.

Oh, that white smallish female with the
breasts,

She's just my niece . . . Herodias,³ I would
say,—

Who went and danced and got men's heads
cut off!

Have it all out!" Now, is this sense, I ask?
A fine way to paint soul, by painting body
So ill, the eye can't stop there, must go
further

And can't fare worse! Thus, yellow does for
white

When what you put for yellow's simply black,
And any sort of meaning looks intense
When all beside itself means and looks
naught.

Why can't a painter lift each foot in turn,
Left foot and right foot, go a double step,
Make his flesh liker and his soul more like,
Both in their order? Take the prettiest face,

²Architect and painter (1266-1337).

³See St. Matthew, xiv, 6-11.

¹The Dominicans.

The Prior's niece . . . patron-saint—is it so pretty

You can't discover if it means hope, fear,
Sorrow or joy? won't beauty go with these?
Suppose I've made her eyes all right and blue,

Can't I take breath and try to add life's flash,
And then add soul and heighten them three-fold?

Or say there's beauty with no soul at all—
(I never saw it—put the case the same—)
If you get simple beauty and naught else,
You get about the best thing God invents:
That's somewhat: and you'll find the soul
you have missed,

Within yourself, when you return him thanks.
“Rub all out!” Well, well, there's my life,
in short,

And so the thing has gone on ever since.
I'm grown a man no doubt, I've broken
bounds:

You should not take a fellow eight years old
And make him swear to never kiss the girls.
I'm my own master, paint now as I please—
Having a friend, you see, in the Corner-house!¹

Lord, it's fast holding by the rings in front—
Those great rings serve more purposes than
just

To plant a flag in, or tie up a horse!
And yet the old schooling sticks, the old
grave eyes

Are peeping o'er my shoulder as I work,
The heads shake still—“It's art's decline,
my son!

You're not of the true painters, great and old;
Brother Angelico's² the man, you'll find;
Brother Lorenzo stands his single peer:
Fag on at flesh, you'll never make the third!”
Flower o' the pine,

*You keep your mistr . . . manners, and I'll
stick to mine!*

I'm not the third, then: bless us, they must
know!

Don't you think they're the likeliest to know,
They with their Latin? So, I swallow my
rage,

Clench my teeth, suck my lips in tight, and
paint

To please them—sometimes do and some-
times don't;

For, doing most, there's pretty sure to come
A turn, some warm eve finds me at my
saints—

A laugh, a cry, the business of the world—
(*Flower o' the peach,*

Death for us all, and his own life for each!)
And my whole soul revolves, the cup runs
over,

The world and life's too big to pass for a
dream,

And I do these wild things in sheer despite,
And play the fooleries you catch me at,

In pure rage! The old mill-horse, out at
grass

After hard years, throws up his stiff heels so,
Although the miller does not preach to him
The only good of grass is to make chaff.

What would men have? Do they like grass
or no—

May they or mayn't they? all I want's the
thing

Settled for ever one way. As it is,
You tell too many lies and hurt yourself:
You don't like what you only like too much,
You do like what, if given you at your word,
You find abundantly detestable.

For me, I think I speak as I was taught;
I always see the garden and God there
A-making man's wife: and, my lesson
learned,

The value and significance of flesh,
I can't unlearn ten minutes afterwards.

You understand me: I'm a beast, I know.
But see, now—why, I see as certainly
As that the morning-star's about to shine,
What will hap some day. We've a youngster
here

Comes to our convent, studies what I do,
Slouches and stares and lets no atom drop:
His name is Guidi³—he'll not mind the
monks—

They call him Hulking Tom, he lets them
talk—

He picks my practice up—he'll paint apace,
I hope so—though I never live so long,
I know what's sure to follow. You be judge!

³Tommaso Guidi, called Masaccio (1401-1428).
Browning for the sake of his point reverses the historical
relationship between him and Fra Lippo.

¹*I.e.*, in the Medici Palace.

²Fra Angelico (1387-1455) was a religious painter, painting the soul and not minding the legs and arms. He is said to have fasted and prayed before painting, and to have painted some of his pictures while kneeling. Lorenzo Monaco (the monk) was a painter of the Camaldolese.

You speak no Latin more than I, belike;
However, you're my man, you've seen the
world

—The beauty and the wonder and the power,
The shapes of things, their colors, lights and
shades,

Changes, surprises,—and God made it all!

—For what? Do you feel thankful, ay or
no,

For this fair town's face, yonder river's line,
The mountain round it and the sky above,
Much more the figures of man, woman,
child,

These are the frame to? What's it all about?
To be passed over, despised? or dwelt upon,
Wondered at? oh, this last of course!—you
say.

But why not do as well as say,—paint these
Just as they are, careless what comes of it?
God's works—paint any one, and count it
crime

To let a truth slip. Don't object, "His
works

Are here already; nature is complete:

Suppose you reproduce her—(which you
can't)

There's no advantage! you must beat her,
then."

For, don't you mark? we're made so that
we love

First when we see them painted, things we
have passed

Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;
And so they are better, painted—better to us,
Which is the same thing. Art was given for
that;

God uses us to help each other so,

Lending our minds out. Have you noticed,
now,

Your cullion's¹ hanging face? A bit of chalk,
And trust me but you should, though! How
much more,

If I drew higher things with the same truth!
That were to take the Prior's pulpit-place,
Interpret God to all of you! Oh, oh,

It makes me mad to see what men shall do
And we in our graves! This world's no blot
for us,

Nor blank; it means intensely, and means
good:

To find its meaning is my meat and drink.
"Ay, but you don't so instigate to prayer!"

Strikes in the Prior: "when your meaning's
plain

It does not say to folk—remember matins,
Or, mind you fast next Friday!" Why, for
this

What need of art at all? A skull and bones,
Two bits of stick nailed crosswise, or, what's
best,

A bell to chime the hour with, does as well.
I painted a Saint Laurence six months since
At Prato, splashed the fresco in fine style:
"How looks my painting, now the scaffold's
down?"

I ask a brother: "Hugely," he returns—
"Already not one phiz of your three slaves
Who turn the Deacon off his toasted side,²
But's scratched and prodded to our heart's
content,

The pious people have so eased their own
With coming to say prayers there in a rage:
We get on fast to see the bricks beneath.

Expect another job this time next year,
For pity and religion grow i' the crowd—
Your painting serves its purpose!" Hang
the fools!

—That is—you'll not mistake an idle word
Spoke in a huff by a poor monk, God wot,
Tasting the air this spicy night which turns
The unaccustomed head like Chianti wine!
Oh, the church knows! don't misreport me,
now!

It's natural a poor monk out of bounds
Should have his apt word to excuse himself:
And hearken how I plot to make amends.

I have bethought me: I shall paint a piece
. . . There's for you! Give me six months,
then go, see

Something in Sant' Ambrogio's! Bless the
nuns!

They want a cast o' my office. I shall paint³
God in the midst, Madonna and her babe,
Ringed by a bowery, flowery angel-brood,
Lilies and vestments and white faces, sweet
As puff on puff of grated orris-root

When ladies crowd to Church at midsummer.
And then i' the front, of course a saint or
two—

Saint John, because he saves the Florentines,

²St. Laurence suffered martyrdom by being burned
on a gridiron.

³The picture described is known as "The Coronation
of the Virgin." It is now in the Accademia delle Belle
Arti at Florence.

¹Fellow's.

Saint Ambrose, who puts down in black and white

The convent's friends and gives them a long day,

And Job, I must have him there past mistake,

The man of Uz (and Us without the z, Painters who need his patience). Well, all these

Secured at their devotion, up shall come Out of a corner when you least expect, As one by a dark stair into a great light, Music and talking, who but Lippo! I!— Mazed, motionless, and moonstruck—I'm the man!

Back I shrink—what is this I see and hear? I, caught up with my monk's-things by mistake,

My old serge gown and rope that goes all round,

I, in this presence, this pure company! Where's a hole, where's a corner for escape? Then steps a sweet angelic slip of a thing
• Forward, puts out a soft palm—"Not so fast!"

—Addresses the celestial presence, "nay— He made you and devised you, after all, Though he's none of you! Could Saint John there draw—

His camel-hair make up a painting-brush? We come to brother Lippo for all that, *Iste perfecit opus!*¹ So, all smile— I shuffle sideways with my blushing face Under the cover of a hundred wings Thrown like a spread of kirtles when you're gay

And play hot cockles, all the doors being shut,

Till, wholly unexpected, in there pops The hothead husband! Thus I scuttle off To some safe bench behind, not letting go The palm of her, the little lily thing That spoke the good word for me in the nick, Like the Prior's niece . . . Saint Lucy, I would say.

And so all's saved for me, and for the church A pretty picture gained. Go, six months hence!

Your hand, sir, and good-by: no lights, no lights!

The street's hushed, and I know my own way back,

Don't fear me! There's the gray beginning. Zooks!

ANDREA DEL SARTO²

CALLED "THE FAULTLESS PAINTER"

BUT do not let us quarrel any more, No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once: Sit down and all shall happen as you wish. You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?

I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,

Treat his own subject after his own way, Fix his own time, accept too his own price, And shut the money into this small hand When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly? Oh, I'll content him,—but to-morrow, Love! I often am much wearier than you think, This evening more than usual, and it seems As if—forgive now—should you let me sit Here by the window with your hand in mine And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole,³

Both of one mind, as married people use, Quietly, quietly the evening through, I might get up to-morrow to my work Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try. To-morrow, how you shall be glad for this! Your soft hand is a woman of itself, And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.

Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve

For each of the five pictures we require: It saves a model. So! keep looking so— My serpentine beauty, rounds on rounds! —How could you ever prick those perfect ears,

Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet— My face, my moon, my everybody's moon, Which everybody looks on and calls his, And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn, While she looks—no one's: very dear, no less.

You smile? why, there's my picture ready made,

There's what we painters call our harmony! A common grayness silvers everything,— All in a twilight, you and I alike

¹This man made the picture (work). The words appear in the picture, on a scroll running from the speaker towards Fra Lippo.

²Published in 1855. Andrea's life (1486–1531) is to be found in Vasari's *Lives of the Painters*.

³A small town about three miles west of Florence.

—You, at the point of your first pride in me
 (That's gone you know),—but I, at every
 point;
 My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned
 down
 To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.
 There's the bell clinking from the chapel-
 top;
 That length of convent-wall across the way
 Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;
 The last monk leaves the garden; days de-
 crease,
 And autumn grows, autumn in everything.
 Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape
 As if I saw alike my work and self
 And all that I was born to be and do,
 A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's
 hand.
 How strange now looks the life he makes us
 lead;
 So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!
 I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!
 This chamber for example—turn your head—
 All that's behind us! You don't understand
 Nor care to understand about my art,
 But you can hear at least when people speak:
 And that cartoon, the second from the door
 —It is the thing, Love! so such thing should
 be—
 Behold Madonna!—I am bold to say.
 I can do with my pencil what I know,
 What I see, what at bottom of my heart
 I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—
 Do easily, too—when I say, perfectly,
 I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge,
 Who listened to the Legate's talk last week,
 And just as much they used to say in France.
 At any rate 'tis easy, all of it!
 No sketches first, no studies, that's long past:
 I do what many dream of all their lives,
 —Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,
 And fail in doing. I could count twenty
 such
 On twice your fingers, and not leave this
 town,
 Who strive—you don't know how the others
 strive
 To paint a little thing like that you smeared
 Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,—
 Yet do much less, so much less, Someone
 says,
 (I know his name, no matter)—so much less!
 Well, less is more, Lucrezia: I am judged.
 There burns a truer light of God in them,

In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-
 up brain,
 Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to
 prompt
 This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand
 of mine.
 Their works drop groundward, but them-
 selves, I know,
 Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to
 me,
 Enter and take their place there sure enough,
 Though they come back and cannot tell the
 world.
 My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.
 The sudden blood of these men! at a word—
 Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils
 too.
 I, painting from myself and to myself,
 Know what I do, am unmoved by men's
 blame
 Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
 Morello's outline¹ there is wrongly traced,
 His hue mistaken; what of that? or else,
 Rightly traced and well ordered; what of
 that?
 Speak as they please, what does the moun-
 tain care?
 Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his
 grasp,
 Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-gray
 Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!
 I know both what I want and what might
 gain,
 And yet how profitless to know, to sigh
 "Had I been two, another and myself,
 Our head would have o'erlooked the world!"
 No doubt.
 Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth
 The Urbinate² who died five years ago.
 ('Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.)
 Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
 Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,
 Reaching, that heaven might so replenish
 him,
 Above and through his art—for it gives way;
 That arm is wrongly put—and there again—
 A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
 Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,
 He means right—that, a child may under-
 stand.
 Still, what an arm! and I could alter it:

¹Morello is a mountain of the Apennines, north of Florence.

²Raphael (1483-1520), who was born at Urbino.

But all the play, the insight and the stretch—
Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?
Had you enjoined them on me, given me
soul,

We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!
Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think—
More than I merit, yes, by many times.

But had you—oh, with the same perfect
brow,

And perfect eyes, and more than perfect
mouth,

And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare—
Had you, with these the same, but brought
a mind!

Some women do so. Had the mouth there
urged

"God and the glory! never care for gain.

The present by the future, what is that?

Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo!¹

Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!"

I might have done it for you. So it seems:

Perhaps not. All is as God overrules.

Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;

The rest avail not. Why do I need you?

What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?

In this world, who can do a thing, will not;

And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:

Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too,
the power—

And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,

God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.

'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,

That I am something underrated here,

Poor this long while, despised, to speak the
truth.

I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,

For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.

The best is when they pass and look aside;

But they speak sometimes; I must bear it
all.

Well may they speak! That Francis,² that
first time,

And that long festal year at Fontainebleau!

I surely then could sometimes leave the
ground,

Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,

In that humane great monarch's golden
look,—

One finger in his beard or twisted curl

Over his mouth's good mark that made the
smile,

One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,
The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,

I painting proudly with his breath on me,
All his court round him, seeing with his
eyes,

Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of
souls

Profuse, my hand kept plying by those
hearts,—

And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,

This in the background, waiting on my work,

To crown the issue with a last reward!

A good time, was it not, my kingly days?

And had you not grown restless . . . but I
know—

'Tis done and past; 'twas right, my in-
stinct said;

Too live the life grew, golden and not gray,

And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should
tempt

Out of the grange whose four walls make his
world.

How could it end in any other way?

You called me, and I came home to your
heart.

The triumph was—to reach and stay there;
since

I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?

Let my hands frame your face in your hair's
gold,

You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!

"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;

The Roman's is the better when you pray,

But still the other's Virgin was his wife"—

Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge

Both pictures in your presence; clearer
grows

My better fortune, I resolve to think.

For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,

Said one day Agnolo, his very self,

To Rafael . . . I have known it all these
years . . .

(When the young man was flaming out his
thoughts

Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,

Too lifted up in heart because of it)

"Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub
Goes up and down our Florence, none cares
how,

Who, were he set to plan and execute

As you are, pricked on by your popes and
kings,

¹Michael Angelo (1475-1564).

²King Francis I of France, Andrea's patron. Fontainebleau is a town near Paris, where is situated the royal palace in which Andrea worked.

Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"

To Rafael's!—And indeed the arm is wrong. I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see, Give the chalk here—quick, thus the line should go!

Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out! Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth, (What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo? Do you forget already words like those?) If really there was such a chance, so lost,—Is, whether you're —not grateful—but more pleased.

Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!

This hour has been an hour! Another smile? If you would sit thus by me every night I should work better, do you comprehend? I mean that I should earn more, give you more.

See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star; Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,

The cue-owls¹ speak the name we call them by.

Come from the window, love,—come in, at last,

Inside the melancholy little house We built to be so gay with. God is just. King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights When I look up from painting, eyes tired out, The walls become illumined, brick from brick

Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold, That gold of his I did cement them with! Let us but love each other. Must you go? That Cousin here again? he waits outside? Must see you—you, and not with me? Those loans?

More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?

Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?

While hand and eye and something of a heart

Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth?

I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit The gray remainder of the evening out, Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly How I could paint, were I but back in France,

One picture, just one more—the Virgin's face,

Not yours this time! I want you at my side To hear them—that is, Michel Agnolo— Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.

Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend. I take the subjects for his corridor, Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there, And throw him in another thing or two If he demurs; the whole should prove enough To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside, What's better and what's all I care about, Get you the thirteen scudi² for the ruff!

Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,

The Cousin! what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night. I regret little, I would change still less. Since there my past life lies, why alter it? The very wrong to Francis!—it is true I took his coin, was tempted and complied, And built this house and sinned, and all is said.

My father and my mother died of want. Well, had I riches of my own? you see How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.

They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:

And I have labored somewhat in my time And not been paid profusely. Some good son

Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try! No doubt, there's something strikes a balance. Yes,

You loved me quite enough, it seems to-night.

This must suffice me here. What would one have?

In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance—

Four great walls in the New Jerusalem, Meted on each side by the angel's reed, For Leonard,³ Rafael, Agnolo and me To cover—the three first without a wife, While I have mine! So—still they overcome Because there's still Lucrezia,—as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

²Coins worth about 97 cents.

³Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519).

¹The scops owl, whose cry sounds like Italian *ciù*.

A GRAMMARIAN'S
FUNERAL¹SHORTLY AFTER THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING IN
EUROPE

LET US begin and carry up this corpse,
Singing together.
Leave we the common crofts, the vulgar
thorpes²
Each in its tether
Sleeping safe on the bosom of the plain,
Cared-for till cock-crow:
Look out if yonder be not day again
Rimming the rock-row!
That's the appropriate country; there, man's
thought,
Rarer, intenser,
Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it ought,
Chafes in the censer.
Leave we the unlettered plain its herd and
crop;
Seek we the sepulture
On a tall mountain, citied to the top,
Crowded with culture!
All the peaks soar, but one the rest excels;
Clouds overcome it;
No! yonder sparkle is the citadel's
Circling its summit.
Thither our path lies; wind we up the
heights;
Wait ye the warning?
Our low life was the level's and the night's;
He's for the morning.
Step to a tune, square chests, erect each head,
'Ware the beholders!
This is our master, famous, calm and dead,
Borne on our shoulders.
Sleep, crop and herd! sleep, darkling thorpe
and croft,
Safe from the weather!
He, whom we convoy to his grave aloft,
Singing together,
He was a man born with thy face and throat,
Lyric Apollo!
Long he lived nameless: how should Spring
take note
Winter would follow?
Till lo, the little touch, and youth was gone!
Cramped and diminished,
Moaned he, "New measures, other feet anon!
My dance is finished?"

No, that's the world's way: (keep the
mountain-side,
Make for the city!)
He knew the signal, and stepped on with
pride
Over men's pity;
Left play for work, and grappled with the
world
Bent on escaping:
"What's in the scroll," quoth he, "thou
keepest furled?
Show me their shapings,
Theirs who most studied man, the bard and
sage,—
Give!"—So, he gowned him,
Straight got by heart that book to its last
page:
Learnéd, we found him,
Yea, but we found him bald too, eyes like
lead,
Accents uncertain:
"Time to taste life," another would have
said,
"Up with the curtain!"
This man said rather, "Actual life comes
next?
Patience a moment!
Grant I have mastered learning's crabbéd
text,
Still there's the comment.
Let me know all! Prate not of most or least,
Painful or easy!
Even to the crumbs I'd fain eat up the feast,
Ay, nor feel queasy."
Oh, such a life as he resolved to live,
When he had learned it,
When he had gathered all books had to give!
Sooner, he spurned it.
Image the whole, then execute the parts—
Fancy the fabric
Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike fire from
quartz,
Ere mortar dab brick!
(Here's the town-gate reached: there's the
market-place
Gaping before us.)
Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace
(Hearten our chorus!)
That before living he'd learn how to live—
No end to learning:
Earn the means first—God surely will con-
tribute
Use for our earning.

¹Published in 1855.²The common farms, the vulgar villages.

Others mistrust and say, "But time escapes:
Live now or never!"

He said, "What's time? Leave Now for dogs
and apes!

Man has Forever."

Back to his book then: deeper drooped his
head:

*Calculus*¹ racked him:

Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of lead:

*Tussis*² attacked him.

"Now, master, take a little rest!"—not he!
(Caution redoubled,

Step two abreast, the way winds narrowly!)

Not a whit troubled,

Back to his studies, fresher than at first,

Fierce as a dragon

He (soul-hydroptic³ with a sacred thirst)

Sucked at the flagon.

Oh, if we draw a circle premature,

Heedless of far gain,

Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure

Bad is our bargain!

Was it not great? did not he throw on God,
(He loves the burthen)—

God's task to make the heavenly period

Perfect the earthen?

Did not he magnify the mind, show clear

Just what it all meant?

He would not discount life, as fools do here,
Paid by instalment.

He ventured neck or nothing—heaven's
success

Found, or earth's failure:

"Wilt thou trust death or not?" He an-
swered "Yes!

Hence with life's pale lure!"

That low man seeks a little thing to do,

Sees it and does it:

This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies ere he knows it.

That low man goes on adding one to one,

His hundred's soon hit:

This high man, aiming at a million,

Misses an unit.

That, has the world here—should he need
the next,

Let the world mind him!

This, throws himself on God, and unper-
plexed

Seeking shall find him.

So, with the throttling hands of death at
strife,

Ground he at grammar;

Still, through the rattle, parts of speech were
rife;

While he could stammer

He settled *Hoti's* business—let it be!—

Properly based *Oun*—

Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*,⁴

Dead from the waist down.

Well, here's the platform, here's the proper
place:

Hail to your purlieus,

All ye highfliers of the feathered race,

Swallows and curlews!

Here's the top-peak; the multitude below

Live, for they can, there:

This man decided not to Live but Know—

Bury this man there?

Here—here's his place, where meteors shoot,
clouds form,

Lightnings are loosened,

Stars come and go! Let joy break with the
storm,

Peace let the dew send!

Lofty designs must close in like effects:

Loftily lying,

Leave him—still loftier than the world sus-
pects,

Living and dying.

⁴These are Greek particles, meaning respectively *that*, *therefore*, and *towards*. Concerning the last Browning wrote to the *London Daily News* on 20 November, 1874: "In a clever article this morning you speak of 'the doctrine of enclitic *De*'—which, with all deference to Mr. Browning, in point of fact does not exist.' No, not to Mr. Browning: but pray defer to Herr Buttmann, whose fifth list of 'enclitics' ends with 'the inseparable *De*'—or to Curtius, whose fifth list ends also with '*De* (meaning "*towards*" and as a demonstrative appendage).' That this is not to be confounded with the accentuated '*De*, meaning *but*' was the 'doctrine' which the Grammarian bequeathed to those capable of receiving it."

¹The stone.

²A cough.

³Soul-thirsty.

ABT VOGLER¹

(AFTER HE HAS BEEN EXTEMPORIZING UPON
THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT OF HIS INVENTION)

Would that the structure brave, the manifold music I build,

Bidding my organ obey, calling its keys
to their work,

Claiming each slave of the sound, at a touch,
as when Solomon willed

Armies of angels that soar, legions of
demons that lurk,

Man, brute, reptile, fly,—alien of end and
of aim,

Adverse, each from the other heaven-high,
hell-deep removed,—

Should rush into sight at once as he named
the ineffable Name,

And pile him a palace straight, to pleasure
the princess he loved!²

Would it might tarry like his, the beautiful
building of mine,

This which my keys in a crowd pressed
and importuned to raise!

Ah, one and all, how they helped, would dis-
part now and now combine,

Zealous to hasten the work, heighten their
master his praise!

And one would bury his brow with a blind
plunge down to hell,

Burrow awhile and build, broad on the
roots of things,

Then up again swim into sight, having based
me my palace well,

Founded it, fearless of flame, flat on the
nether springs.

And another would mount and march, like
the excellent minion he was,

Ay, another and yet another, one crowd
but with many a crest,

Raising my rampired³ walls of gold as trans-
parent as glass,

Eager to do and die, yield each his place to
the rest:

¹Published in 1864. George Joseph Vogler (1749–1814), organist and composer, was a native of Würzburg. He invented an instrument called the *Orchestrion*—a compact organ with four keyboards of five octaves each and a pedal-board of thirty-six keys. Vogler was a Catholic priest—hence Browning's "Abt."

²Jewish legend gave Solomon such powers as this. "The ineffable Name" is the unspeakable name of God.

³Rampire means, rampart.

For higher still and higher (as a runner tips
with fire,

When a great illumination surprises a
festal night—

Outlined round and round Rome's dome⁴
from space to spire)

Up, the pinnaced glory reached, and the
pride of my soul was in sight.

In sight? Not half! for it seemed, it was
certain, to match man's birth,

Nature in turn conceived, obeying an im-
pulse as I;

And the emulous heaven yearned down,
made effort to reach the earth,

As the earth had done her best, in my
passion, to scale the sky:

Novel splendors burst forth, grew familiar
and dwelt with mine,

Not a point nor peak but found and fixed
its wandering star;

Meteor-moons, balls of blaze: and they did
not pale nor pine,

For earth had attained to heaven, there
was no more near nor far.

Nay more; for there wanted not who walked
in the glare and glow,

Presences⁵ plain in the place; or, fresh from
the Protoplast,⁶

Furnished for ages to come, when a kindlier
wind should blow,

Lured now to begin and live, in a house to
their liking at last;

Or else the wonderful Dead who have passed
through the body and gone,

But were back once more to breathe in an
old world worth their new:

What never had been, was now; what was,
as it shall be anon;

And what is,—shall I say, matched both?
for I was made perfect too.

All through my keys that gave their sounds
to a wish of my soul,

All through my soul that praised as its
wish flowed visibly forth,

All through music and me! For think, had I
painted the whole,

Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the
process so wonder-worth:

⁴St. Peter's. ⁵Spirits.

⁶The thing first formed, as a model to be imitated.

Had I written the same, made verse—still,
 effect proceeds from cause,
 Ye know why the forms are fair, ye hear
 how the tale is told;
 It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience
 to laws,
 Painter and poet are proud in the artist-list
 enrolled:—

But here is the finger of God, a flash of the
 will that can,
 Existent behind all laws, that made them
 and, lo, they are!
 And I know not if, save in this, such gift be
 allowed to man,
 That out of three sounds he frame, not a
 fourth sound, but a star.
 Consider it well: each tone of our scale in
 itself is naught:
 It is everywhere in the world—loud, soft,
 and all is said:
 Give it to me to use! I mix it with two in
 my thought:
 And there! Ye have heard and seen:
 consider and bow the head!

Well, it is gone at last, the palace of music I
 reared;
 Gone! and the good tears start, the
 praises that come too slow;
 For one is assured at first, one scarce can say
 that he feared,
 That he even gave it a thought, the gone
 thing was to go.
 Never to be again! But many more of the
 kind
 As good, nay, better perchance: is this
 your comfort to me?
 To me, who must be saved because I cling
 with my mind
 To the same, same self, same love, same
 God: ay, what was, shall be.

Therefore to whom turn I but to thee, the
 ineffable Name?
 Builder and maker, thou, of houses not
 made with hands!
 What, have fear of change from thee who art
 ever the same?
 Doubt that thy power can fill the heart
 that thy power expands?
 There shall never be one lost good! What
 was, shall live as before;

The evil is null, is naught, is silence
 implying sound;
 What was good shall be good, with, for evil,
 so much good more;
 On the earth the broken arcs; in the
 heaven a perfect round.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of
 good shall exist;
 Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty,
 nor good, nor power
 Whose voice has gone forth, but each sur-
 vives for the melodist
 When eternity affirms the conception of an
 hour.
 The high that proved too high, the heroic for
 earth too hard,
 The passion that left the ground to lose
 itself in the sky,
 Are music sent up to God by the lover and
 the bard;
 Enough that he heard it once: we shall
 hear it by and by.

And what is our failure here but a triumph's
 evidence
 For the fullness of the days? Have we
 withered or agonized?
 Why else was the pause prolonged but that
 singing might issue thence?
 Why rushed the discords in, but that
 harmony should be prized?
 Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to
 clear,
 Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of
 the weal and woe:
 But God has a few of us whom he whispers
 in the ear;
 The rest may reason and welcome: 'tis
 we musicians know.

Well, it is earth with me; silence resumes her
 reign:
 I will be patient and proud, and soberly
 acquiesce.
 Give me the keys. I feel for the common
 chord¹ again,
 Sliding by semitones till I sink to the
 minor,—yes,

¹A fundamental tone with its major (4 semitones)
 or minor (3 semitones) third, and a perfect fifth (7
 semitones) above it.

And I blunt it into a ninth,¹ and I stand on
alien ground,
Surveying awhile the heights I rolled from
into the deep;
Which, hark, I have dared and done, for my
resting-place is found,
The C Major² of this life: so, now I will
try to sleep.

PROSPICE³

FEAR death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the
storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible
form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit
attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be
gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes,
and forebore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my
peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's
arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the
brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that
rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of
pain,

Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee
again,
And with God be the rest!

RABBI BEN EZRA⁴

GROW old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in his hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all,
nor be afraid!"

Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sighed, "Which rose make ours,
Which lily leave and then as best recall?"
Not that, admiring stars,
It yearned, "Nor Jove, nor Mars;
Mine be some figured flame which blends,
transcends them all!"

Not for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate: folly wide the mark!
Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a
spark.

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men;
Irks care the crop full bird? Frets doubt the
maw-crammed beast?

Rejoice we are allied
To that which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of his tribes that take, I
must believe.

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,

¹Either an interval containing an octave and two semitones (major) or one containing an octave and one semitone (minor).

²This scale contains no sharps or flats.

³Published in 1864, written in 1861 not long after Mrs. Browning's death. The title means, Look forward.

⁴Published in 1864. Abenezra, or Ibn Ezra (1090?-1168?), was one of the most distinguished Jewish learned men of the Middle Age, and attained eminence as philosopher, astronomer, physician, and poet, and particularly as grammarian and commentator. Browning derived much in this poem from his works, though his own views coincided largely with Ibn Ezra's teaching.

Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
 Be our joys three-parts pain!
 Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
 Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never
 grudge the throe!

For thence,—a paradox
 Which comforts while it mocks,—
 Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
 What I aspired to be,
 And was not, comforts me:
 A brute I might have been, but would not
 sink i' the scale.

What is he but a brute
 Whose flesh has soul to suit,
 Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want
 play?
 To man, propose this test—
 Thy body at its best,
 How far can that project thy soul on its lone
 way?

Yet gifts should prove their use:
 I own the Past profuse
 Of power each side, perfection every turn:
 Eyes, ears took in their dole,
 Brain treasured up the whole;
 Should not the heart beat once "How good to
 live and learn"?

Not once beat "Praise be thine!
 I see the whole design,
 I, who saw power, see now Love perfect too:
 Perfect I call thy plan:
 Thanks that I was a man!
 Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what
 thou shalt do!"

For pleasant is this flesh;
 Our soul, in its rose-mesh
 Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest:
 Would we some prize might hold
 To match those manifold
 Possessions of the brute,—gain most as we
 did best!

Let us not always say,
 "Spite of this flesh to-day
 I strove, made head, gained ground upon the
 whole!"
 As the bird wings and sings,
 Let us cry, "All good things
 Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than
 flesh helps soul!"

Therefore I summon age
 To grant youth's heritage,
 Life's struggle having so far reached its term:
 Thence shall I pass, approved
 A man, for aye removed
 From the developed brute; a God though in
 the germ.

And I shall thereupon
 Take rest, ere I be gone
 Once more on my adventure brave and new:
 Fearless and unperplexed,
 When I wage battle next,
 What weapons to select, what armor to in-
 due.¹

Youth ended, I shall try
 My gain or loss thereby;
 Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold:
 And I shall weigh the same,
 Give life its praise or blame:
 Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being
 old.

For note, when evening shuts,
 A certain moment cuts
 The deed off, calls the glory from the gray:
 A whisper from the west
 Shoots—"Add this to the rest,
 Take it and try its worth: here dies another
 day."

So, still within this life,
 Though lifted o'er its strife,
 Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
 "This rage was right i' the main,
 That acquiescence vain:
 The Future I may face now I have proved
 the Past."

For more is not reserved
 To man, with soul just nerved
 To act to-morrow what he learns to-day:
 Here, work enough to watch
 The Master work, and catch
 Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's
 true play.

As it was better, youth
 Should strive, through acts uncouth,

¹To put on.

Toward making, than repose on aught found
made:

So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedst age: wait death
nor be afraid!

Enough now, if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand
thine own,
With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee
feel alone.

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,
Announced to each his station in the Past!
Was I, the world arraigned,
Were they, my soul disdained,
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us
peace at last!

Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me: we all surmise,
They this thing, and I that: whom shall my
soul believe?

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the
price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value
in a trice:

But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the
man's amount:

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and
escaped;

All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the
pitcher shaped.

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,¹
That metaphor! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our
clay,—
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,
"Since life fleets, all is change; the Past
gone, seize to-day!"

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand
sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter
and clay endure.

He fixed thee 'mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, would fain ar-
rest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently
impressed.

What though the earlier grooves,
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim,
Skull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner
stress?

Look not thou down but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's
peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips aglow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what
needst thou with earth's wheel?

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who moldest men;

¹See Isaiah, lxiv, 8; also Jeremiah, xviii, 1-6.

And since, not even while the whirl was
 worst,
 Did I—to the wheel of life
 With shapes and colors rife,
 Bound dizzily—mistake my end, to slake
 thy thirst:

So, take and use thy work:
 Amend what flaws may lurk,
 What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past
 the aim!
 My times be in thy hand!
 Perfect the cup as planned!
 Let age approve of youth, and death com-
 plete the same!

CALIBAN UPON SETEBOS

OR, NATURAL THEOLOGY IN THE ISLAND¹

"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an
 one as thyself."

['WILL² sprawl, now that the heat of day is
 best,

Flat on his belly in the pit's much mire,
 With elbows wide, fists clenched to prop his
 chin.

And, while he kicks both feet in the cool
 slush,

And feels about his spine small eft-things³
 course,

Run in and out each arm, and make him
 laugh:

And while above his head a pompion-plant,⁴
 Coating the cave-top as a brow its eye,
 Creeps down to touch and tickle hair and
 beard,

And now a flower drops with a bee inside,
 And now a fruit to snap at, catch and
 crunch,—

He looks out o'er yon sea which sunbeams
 cross

And recross till they weave a spider-web

¹Published in 1864. Caliban is the savage slave of Shakespeare's *Tempest*. Setebos was a Patagonian god whom Shakespeare—reading of him in an Elizabethan narrative of travel—made the god worshiped by Caliban's mother (dam). As Browning's motto (from Psalms, i, 21) indicates, Caliban's theological reflections constitute a commentary upon crudely anthropomorphic conceptions of the Deity.

²*i.e.*, he will. Caliban's imperfect speech includes use of the third person when he is speaking of himself.

³Lizard-like animals.

⁴A vine of the pumpkin family.

(Meshes of fire, some great fish breaks at
 times),

And talks to his own self, howe'er he please,
 Touching that other, whom his dam called
 God.

Because to talk about Him, vexes—ha,
 Could He but know! and time to vex is now,
 When talk is safer than in winter-time.
 Moreover Prosper and Miranda sleep
 In confidence he drudges at their task,
 And it is good to cheat the pair, and gibe,
 Letting the rank tongue blossom into speech.]

Setebos, Setebos, and Setebos!

'Thinketh, He dwelleth i' the cold o' the
 moon.

'Thinketh He made it, with the sun to match,
 But not the stars; the stars came otherwise;
 Only made clouds, winds, meteors, such as
 that:

Also this isle, what lives and grows thereon,
 And snaky sea which rounds and ends the
 same.

'Thinketh, it came of being ill at ease:

He hated that He cannot change His cold,
 Nor cure its ache. 'Hath spied an icy fish
 That longed to 'scape the rock-stream where
 she lived,

And thaw herself within the lukewarm brine
 O' the lazy sea her stream thrusts far amid,
 A crystal spike 'twixt two warm walls of
 wave;

Only, she ever sickened, found repulse
 At the other kind of water, not her life
 (Green-dense and dim-delicious, bred o' the
 sun),

Flounced back from bliss she was not born to
 breathe,

And in her old bounds buried her despair,
 Hating and loving warmth alike: so He.

'Thinketh, He made thereat the sun, this isle,
 Trees and the fowls here, beast and creeping
 thing.

Yon otter, sleek-wet, black, lithe as a leech;
 Yon auk, one fire-eye in a ball of foam,
 That floats and feeds; a certain badger brown
 He hath watched hunt with that slant
 white-wedge eye

By moonlight; and the pie⁵ with the long
 tongue

⁵The magpie.

That pricks deep into oakwarts for a worm,
And says a plain word when she finds her
prize,
But will not eat the ants; the ants them-
selves

That build a wall of seeds and settled stalks
About their hole—He made all these and
more,

Made all we see, and us, in spite: how else?
He could not, Himself, make a second self
To be His mate; as well have made Himself:
He would not make what He mislikes or
slights,

An eyesore to Him, or not worth His pains:
But did, in envy, listlessness or sport,
Make what Himself would fain, in a manner,
be—

Weaker in most points, stronger in a few,
Worthy, and yet mere playthings all the
while,

Things He admires and mocks too,—that is it.
Because, so brave, so better though they be,
It nothing skills if He begin to plague.

Look now, I melt a gourd-fruit into mash,
Add honeycomb and pods, I have perceived,
Which bite like finches when they bill and
kiss,—

Then, when froth rises bladdery, drink up all,
Quick, quick, till maggots scamper through
my brain;

Last, throw me on my back i' the seeded
thyme,

And wanton, wishing I were born a bird.
Put case, unable to be what I wish,
I yet could make a live bird out of clay:
Would not I take clay, pinch my Caliban
Able to fly?—for, there, see, he hath wings,
And great comb like the hoopoe's to admire,
And there, a sting to do his foes offense,
There, and I will that he begin to live,
Fly to yon rock-top, nip me off the horns
Of grigs¹ high up that make the merry din,
Saucy through their veined wings, and mind
me not.

In which feat, if his leg snapped, brittle clay,
And he lay stupid-like,—why, I should
laugh;

And if he, spying me, should fall to weep,
Beseech me to be good, repair his wrong,
Bid his poor leg smart less or grow again,—
Well, as the chance were, this might take or else
Not take my fancy: I might hear his cry,

And give the manikin three sound legs for
one,

Or pluck the other off, leave him like an egg,
And lessoned he was mine and merely clay.
Were this no pleasure, lying in the thyme,
Drinking the mash, with brain become alive,
Making and marring clay at will? So He.

'Thinketh, such shows nor right nor wrong in
Him,

Nor kind, nor cruel: He is strong and Lord.
'Am strong myself compared to yonder crabs
That march now from the mountain to the
sea;

'Let twenty pass, and stone the twenty-first,
Loving not, hating not, just choosing so.

'Say, the first straggler that boasts purple
spots

Shall join the file, one pincer twisted off;

'Say, this bruised fellow shall receive a worm,
And two worms he whose nippers end in red;
As it likes me each time, I do: so He.

Well then, 'supposeth He is good i' the main,
Placable if His mind and ways were guessed,
But rougher than His handiwork, be sure!
Oh, He hath made things worthier than Him-
self,

And envieth that, so helped, such things do
more

Than He who made them! What consoles
but this?

That they, unless through Him, do naught at
all,

And must submit: what other use in things?

'Hath cut a pipe of pithless elder-joint
That, blown through, gives exact the scream
o' the jay

When from her wing you twitch the feathers
blue:

Sound this, and little birds that hate the jay
Flock within stone's throw, glad their foe is
hurt:

Put case such pipe could prattle and boast
forsooth,

"I catch the birds, I am the crafty thing,
I make the cry my maker cannot make
With his great round mouth; he must blow
through mine!"

Would not I smash it with my foot? So He.

But wherefore rough, why cold and ill at
ease?

Aha, that is a question! Ask, for that,

¹Crickets or grasshoppers.

What knows,—the something over Setebos
That made Him, or He, may be, found and
fought,
Worsted, drove off and did to nothing, per-
chance.

There may be something quiet o'er His head,
Out of His reach, that feels nor joy nor grief,
Since both derive from weakness in some way.
I joy because the quails come; would not joy
Could I bring quails here when I have a
mind:

This Quiet, all it hath a mind to, doth.
'Esteemeth stars the outposts of its couch,
But never spends much thought nor care
that way.

It may look up, work up,—the worse for
those

It works on! 'Careth but for Setebos
The many-handed as a cuttle-fish,
Who, making Himself feared through what
He does,

Looks up, first, and perceives he cannot soar
To what is quiet and hath happy life;
Next looks down here, and out of very spite
Makes this a bauble-world to ape yon real,
These good things to match those as hips¹ do
grapes.

'Tis solace making baubles, ay, and sport.
Himself peeped late, eyed Prosper at his
books

Careless and lofty, lord now of the isle:
Vexed, 'stitched a book of broad leaves,
arrow-shaped,

Wrote thereon, he knows what, prodigious
words;

Has peeled a wand and called it by a name;
Weareth at whiles for an enchanter's robe
The eyed skin of a supple oncelot;²

And hath an ounce sleeker than youngling
mole,

A four-legged serpent he makes cower and
couch,

Now snarl, now hold its breath and mind his
eye,

And saith she is Miranda and my wife:
'Keeps for his Ariel a tall pouch-bill crane
He bids go wade for fish and straight dis-
gorge;

Also a sea-beast, lumpish, which he snared,
Blinded the eyes of, and brought somewhat
tame,

And split its toe-webs, and now pens the
drudge

In a hole o' the rock and calls him Caliban;
A bitter heart that bides its time and bites.
'Plays thus at being Prosper in a way,
Taketht his mirth with make-believes: so He.

His dam held that the Quiet made all things
Which Setebos vexed only; 'holds not so.
Who made them weak, meant weakness He
might vex.

Had He meant other, while His hand was in,
Why not make horny eyes no thorn could
prick,

Or plate my scalp with bone against the
snow,

Or overscale my flesh 'neath joint and joint,
Like an orc's³ armor? Ay,—so spoil His
sport!

He is the One now: only He doth all.

'Saith, He may like, perchance, what profits
Him.

Ay, himself loves what does him good; but
why?

'Gets good no otherwise. This blinded
beast

Loves whoso places flesh-meat on his nose,
But, had he eyes, would want no help, but
hate

Or love, just as it liked him: He hath eyes.

Also it pleaseth Setebos to work,
Use all His hands, and exercise much craft,
By no means for the love of what is worked.
'Tasteth, himself, no finer good i' the world
When all goes right, in this safe summer-
time,

And he wants little, hungers, aches not much,
Than trying what to do with wit and
strength.

'Falls to make something: 'piled yon pile
of turfs,

And squared and stuck there squares of soft
white chalk,

And, with a fish-tooth, scratched a moon on
each,

And set up endwise certain spikes of tree,
And crowned the whole with a sloths'³ skull
a-top,

Found dead i' the woods, too hard for one to
kill.

¹The ripened fruit of the wild rosebush.

²A small leopard-like animal (diminutive of ounce in following line).

³A sea monster.

³A slow-moving arboreal mammal, akin to the anteater.

No use at all i' the work, for work's sole sake;
'Shall some day knock it down again: so He.

'Saith He is terrible: watch His feats in
proof!

One hurricane will spoil six good months'
hope.

He hath a spite against me, that I know,
Just as He favors Prosper, who knows why?
So it is, all the same, as well I find.

'Wove wattles¹ half the winter, fenced them
firm

With stone and stake to stop she-tortoises
Crawling to lay their eggs here: well, one
wave,

Feeling the foot of Him upon its neck,
Gaped as a snake does, lolled out its large
tongue,

And licked the whole labor flat: so much
for spite.

'Saw a ball flame down late (yonder it lies)
Where, half an hour before, I slept i' the
shade:

Often they scatter sparkles: there is force!
'Dug up a newt He may have envied once
And turned to stone, shut up inside a stone.
Please Him and hinder this?—What Prosper
does?

Aha, if He would tell me how! Not He!
There is the sport: discover how or die!
All need not die, for of the things o' the isle
Some flee afar, some dive, some run up trees;
Those at His mercy,—why, they please Him
most

When . . . when . . . well, never try the same
way twice!

Repeat what act has pleased, He may grow
wroth.

You must not know His ways, and play Him
off,

Sure of the issue. 'Doth the like himself:
'Spareth a squirrel that it nothing fears
But steals the nut from underneath my
thumb,

And when I threat, bites stoutly in defense:
'Spareth an urchin that contrariwise,
Curls up into a ball, pretending death
For fright at my approach: the two ways
please.

But what would move my choler more than
this,

That either creature counted on its life

¹Twigs.

To-morrow and next day and all days to
come,

Saying, forsooth, in the inmost of its heart,
"Because he did so yesterday with me,
And otherwise with such another brute,
So must he do henceforth and always."—Ay?
Would teach the reasoning couple what
"must" means!

'Doth as he likes, or wherefore Lord? So He.

'Conceiveth all things will continue thus,
And we shall have to live in fear of Him
So long as He lives, keeps His strength: no
change,

If He have done His best, make no new world
To please Him more, so leave off watching
this,—

If He surprise not even the Quiet's self
Some strange day,—or, suppose, grow into it
As grubs grow butterflies: else, here we are,
And there is He, and nowhere help at all.

'Believeth with the life, the pain shall stop.
His dam held different, that after death
He both plagued enemies and feasted friends:
Idly! He doth His worst in this our life,
Giving just respite lest we die through pain,
Saving last pain for worst,—with which, an
end.

Meanwhile, the best way to escape His ire
Is, not to seem too happy. 'Sees, himself,
Yonder two flies, with purple films and pink,
Bask on the pompion-bell above: kills both.
'Sees two black painful beetles roll their ball
On head and tail as if to save their lives:
Moves them the stick away they strive to
clear.

Even so, 'would have Him misconceive,
suppose

This Caliban strives hard and ails no less,
And always, above all else, envies Him;
Wherefore he mainly dances on dark nights,
Moans in the sun, gets under holes to laugh,
And never speaks his mind save housed as
now:

Outside, 'groans, curses. If He caught me
here,
O'erheard this speech, and asked "What
chucklest at?"

'Would, to appease Him, cut a finger off,
Or of my three kid yearlings burn the best,
Or let the toothsome apples rot on tree,
Or push my tame beast for the orc to taste:

While myself lit a fire, and made a song
 And sung it, "*What I hate, be consecrate
 To celebrate Thee and Thy state, no mate
 For Thee; what see for envy in poor me?*"
 Hoping the while, since evils sometimes
 mend,
 Warts rub away and sores are cured with
 slime,
 That some strange day, will either the Quiet
 catch
 And conquer Setebos, or likelier He
 Decrepid may doze, doze, as good as die.

[What, what? A curtain o'er the world at
 once!
 Crickets stop hissing; not a bird—or, yes,
 There scuds His raven that has told Him all!
 It was fool's play, this prattling! Ha! The
 wind
 Shoulders the pillared dust, death's house o'
 the move,
 And fast invading fires begin! White
 blaze—
 A tree's head snaps—and there, there, there,
 there, there,
 His thunder follows! Fool to gibe at Him!
 Lo! 'Lieth flat and loveth Setebos!
 'Maketh his teeth meet through his upper
 lip,
 Will let those quails fly, will not eat this
 month
 One little mess of whelks, so he may 'scape!]

THE RING AND THE BOOK¹

BOOK VII

POMPILIA

I AM just seventeen years and five months
 old,
 And, if I lived one day more, three full
 weeks;
 'Tis writ so in the church's register,
 Lorenzo in Lucina, all my names

¹Published in the winter of 1868-1869 (Book VII in January, 1869). In June, 1860, Browning picked up by chance in Florence a vellum-bound book containing a collection of documents concerning a Roman murder trial of the closing years of the seventeenth century. This is "the book" of the title (now generally known as *The Old Yellow Book*), and it was Browning's chief, though not his only, source of material for the poem. "The ring" was one worn by Mrs. Browning and, after her death, by Browning himself on his

At length, so many names for one poor child.
 —Francesca Camilla Vittoria Angela
 Pompilia Comparini,—laughable!
 Also 'tis writ that I was married there
 Four years ago: and they will add, I hope,
 When they insert my death, a word or two,—
 Omitting all about the mode of death,—
 This, in its place, this which one cares to
 know,
 That I had been a mother of a son
 Exactly two weeks. It will be through grace
 O' the Curate, not through any claim I have;
 Because the boy was born at, so baptized
 Close to, the Villa, in the proper church:
 A pretty church, I say no word against,
 Yet stranger-like,—while this Lorenzo seems
 My own particular place, I always say.
 I used to wonder, when I stood scarce high
 As the bed here, what the marble lion meant,
 With half his body rushing from the wall,
 Eating the figure of a prostrate man—
 (To the right, it is, of entry by the door)—
 An ominous sign to one baptized like me,
 Married, and to be buried there, I hope.
 And they should add, to have my life com-
 plete,

watch-chain (both ring and book are now in the Library of Balliol College, Oxford). Browning explains in Book I how the process of the ring's manufacture struck him as analogous to the passage of the record of the trial through his mind, transforming the collection of crude facts into a poem, and so suggested the title. He began writing the poem in 1864 and completed it in 1868. It is in twelve books, containing a series of dramatic monologues in the course of which the story of the murder trial and of the events leading up to it is told from the varying view-points of the chief characters in the story and of onlookers. Thus, while by no means all of the facts are contained in each book, and while the interpretation and emphasis vary from one book to another, still, the several books are more nearly complete in themselves than would be the case in a narrative poem. It may be useful, however, to give here a brief summary of the chief facts of the story: "A certain Guido Franceschini was married at Rome in 1693 to a certain Pompilia [born on 17 July, 1680] who had been brought up as the daughter of one Pietro Comparini and his wife [Violante]. He took her soon afterwards to his home at Arezzo, where they lived unhappily together for more than three years: Pompilia, according to her husband, was an intractable and unfaithful wife; Guido, according to his wife, was a cruel—indeed an infamous—husband. Suddenly, in April, 1697, under the escort of a young priest called Caponsacchi, Pompilia fled from Arezzo Rome-wards, to rejoin—so she said—her (putative) parents. Guido pursued the fugitives, came up with them at the last stage of their journey, had them arrested on a charge of adultery and of flight or complicity in flight. They were taken to Rome and put upon their trial before the Tribunal

He is a boy and Gaetan by name—
Gaetano, for a reason,—if the friar
Don Celestine will ask this grace for me
Of Curate Ottoboni: he it was
Baptized me: he remembers my whole life
As I do his gray hair.

All these few things
I know are true,—will you remember them?
Because time flies. The surgeon cared for
me,
To count my wounds,—twenty-two dagger-
wounds,
Five deadly, but I do not suffer much—
Or too much pain,—and am to die to-night.

Oh how good God is that my babe was born,
—Better than born, baptized and hid away
Before this happened, safe from being hurt!
That had been sin God could not well forgive:
He was too young to smile and save himself.
When they took, two days after he was born,
My babe away from me to be baptized
And hidden awhile, for fear his foe should
find —

The country-woman, used to nursing babes,
Said, "Why take on so? where is the great
loss?

These next three weeks he will but sleep and
feed,

Only begin to smile at the month's end;
He would not know you, if you kept him
here,

Sooner than that; so, spend three merry
weeks

Snug in the Villa, getting strong and stout,
And then I bring him back to be your own,

of the Governor,' which tribunal, after long delays, pronounced in September, 1697, a somewhat indecisive judgment; Caponsacchi was 'relegated' for a time to Civita Vecchia, Pompilia, pending yet further inquiry, was detained in a nunnery, from which, however, she was soon dismissed to quasi-detention in the Comparini's home. There, on 18 December, 1697, she gave birth to a child; and there, on 2 January, 1698, Guido appeared with four retainers, killed the Comparini, husband and wife, and left Pompilia for dead; she survived, by a miracle, till 6 January [on which day Browning imagines her to tell her version of the story, i. e., Book VII]. Meanwhile the assassins made off for Arezzo, but they were overtaken on their way, conveyed back to Rome, and accused of murder before the above-mentioned Court. That the killing was their act was established by most convincing proofs; the issues raised at the trial were more perplexing. Should a confession be forced by torture from the prisoners? Did they kill

And both of you may steal to—we know
where!"

The month—there wants of it two weeks
this day!

Still, I half fancied when I heard the knock
At the Villa in the dusk, it might prove she—
Come to say, "Since he smiles before the
time,

Why should I cheat you out of one good
hour?

Back I have brought him; speak to him and
judge!"

Now I shall never see him; what is worse,
When he grows up and gets to be my age,
He will seem hardly more than a great boy;
And if he asks, "What was my mother like?"
People may answer, "Like girls of seven-
teen"—

And how can he but think of this and that,
Lucias, Marias, Sofias, who titter or blush
When he regards them as such boys may do?
Therefore I wish some one will please to say
I looked already old though I was young;
Do I not . . . say, if you are by to speak . . .
Look nearer twenty? No more like, at
least,

Girls who look arch or redden when boys
laugh,

Than the poor Virgin that I used to know
At our street-corner in a lonely niche,—
The babe, that sat upon her knees, broke
off,—

Thin white glazed clay, you pitied her the
more:

She, not the gay ones, always got my rose.

How happy those are who know how to
write!

their victims to avenge Guido's outraged honor, and was that an extenuation, if not a justification, of the killing? Had Guido's honor been, in fact, outraged? Was the killing attended, or not attended, by aggravating circumstances? Such were the questions discussed, in a series of pleadings, by the state officials who appeared in the case; on these questions 'wrangled, brangled, jangled they a month' or rather more. At last, on 18 February, the Court gave judgment; it condemned the accused, and after an appeal to the Pope, promptly dismissed, they were executed on 22 February" (A. K. Cook, *Commentary*, pp. xvii-xviii). Browning insisted that in writing *The Ring and the Book* he was completely faithful to his documentary sources. It is a fact, however, that the character of Pompilia is almost entirely of his own creation, and that in creating it he departed from some of the facts concerning her contained in the documents.

Such could write what their son should read
in time,

Had they a whole day to live out like me.
Also my name is not a common name,
"Pompilia," and may help to keep apart
A little the thing I am from what girls are.
But then how far away, how hard to find
Will anything about me have become,
Even if the boy bethink himself and ask!
No father that ever knew at all,
Nor ever had—no, never had, I say!
That is the truth,—nor any mother left,
Out of the little two weeks that she lived,
Fit for such memory as might assist:
As good too as no family, no name,
Not even poor old Pietro's name, nor hers,
Poor kind unwise Violante, since it seems
They must not be my parents any more.
That is why something put it in my head
To call the boy "Gaetano"—no old name
For sorrow's sake; I looked up to the sky
And took a new saint to begin anew.
One who has only been made saint—how
long?

Twenty-five years:¹ so, carefuller, perhaps,
To guard a namesake than those old saints
grow,
Tired out by this time,—see my own five
saints!

On second thoughts, I hope he will regard
The history of me as what some one dreamed,
And get to disbelieve it at the last:
Since to myself it dwindles fast to that,
Sheer dreaming and impossibility,—
Just in four days too! All the seventeen
years,

Not once did a suspicion visit me
How very different a lot is mine
From any other woman's in the world.
The reason must be, 'twas by step and step
It got to grow so terrible and strange.
These strange woes stole on tiptoe, as it were,
Into my neighborhood and privacy,
Sat down where I sat, laid them where I lay;
And I was found familiarized with fear,
When friends broke in, held up a torch and
cried,

"Why, you Pompilia in the cavern thus,
How comes that arm of yours about a wolf?
And the soft length,—lies in and out your
feet

¹Gaetano, archbishop of Teate, lived from 1480 to 1547, but was not canonized until 1671.

And laps you round the knee,—a snake it is!"
And so on.

Well, and they are right enough,
By the torch they hold up now: for first,
observe,
I never had a father,—no, nor yet
A mother: my own boy can say at least,
"I had a mother whom I kept two weeks!"
Not I, who little used to doubt . . . I doubt
Good Pietro, kind Violante, gave me birth?
They loved me always as I love my babe
(—Nearly so, that is—quite so could not
be—)
Did for me all I meant to do for him,
Till one surprising day,² three years ago,
They both declared, at Rome, before some
judge

In some court where the people flocked to
hear,
That really I had never been their child,
Was a mere castaway, the careless crime
Of an unknown man, the crime and care too
much
Of a woman known too well,—little to these,
Therefore, of whom I was the flesh and blood:
What then to Pietro and Violante, both
No more my relatives than you or you?
Nothing to them! You know what they
declared.

So with my husband,—just such a surprise,
Such a mistake, in that relationship!
Every one says that husbands love their
wives,
Guard them and guide them, give them
happiness;
'Tis duty, law, pleasure, religion: well,
You see how much of this comes true in mine!
People indeed would fain have somehow
proved
He was no husband:³ but he did not hear,
Or would not wait, and so has killed us all.
Then there is . . . only let me name one
more!

There is the friend,—men will not ask about,
But tell untruths of, and give nicknames to,
And think my lover, most surprise of all!
Do only hear, it is the priest they mean,
Giuseppe Caponsacchi: a priest—love,

²In April or May, 1694, soon after their return from Arezzo, whither they had gone shortly after Franceschini had taken Pompilia there.

³A suit for divorce had been instituted.

And love me! Well, yet people think he did.
I am married, he has taken priestly vows,
They know that, and yet go on, say, the
same,

"Yes, how he loves you!" "That was love"—
they say,

When anything is answered that they ask:
Or else "No wonder you love him"—they
say.

Then they shake heads, pity much, scarcely
blame—

As if we neither of us lacked excuse,
And anyhow are punished to the full,
And downright love atones for everything!
Nay, I heard read out in the public court
Before the judge, in presence of my friends,
Letters 'twas said the priest had sent to me,
And other letters sent him by myself,
We being lovers!

Listen what this is like!

When I was a mere child, my mother . . .
that's

'Violante, you must let me call her so,
Nor waste time, trying to unlearn the
word

She brought a neighbor's child of my own age
To play with me of rainy afternoons:
And, since there hung a tapestry on the wall,
We two agreed to find each other out
Among the figures. "Tisbe, that is you,
With half-moon on your hair-knot, spear in
hand,

Flying, but no wings, only the great scarf
Blown to a bluish rainbow at your back:
Call off your hound and leave the stag
alone!"¹

"—And there are you, Pompilia, such green
leaves

Flourishing out of your five finger-ends,
And all the rest of you so brown and rough:
Why is it you are turned a sort of tree?"²
You know the figures never were ourselves
Though we nicknamed them so. Thus, all
my life,—

As well what was, as what, like this, was
not,—

Looks old, fantastic and impossible:
I touch a fairy thing that fades and fades.
—Even to my babe! I thought, when he
was born,

¹The figure was one of Diana.

²Daphne, who was turned into a bay tree when
pursued by Apollo.

Something began for once that would not
end,

Nor change into a laugh at me, but stay
Forevermore, eternally quite mine.

Well, so he is,—but yet they bore him off,
The third day, lest my husband should lay
traps

And catch him, and by means of him catch
me.

Since they have saved him so, it was well
done:

Yet thence comes such confusion of what was
With what will be,—that late seems long ago,
And, what years should bring round, already
come,

Till even he withdraws into a dream

As the rest do: I fancy him grown great,
Strong, stern, a tall young man who tutors
me,

Frowns with the others, "Poor imprudent
child!

Why did you venture out of the safe street?
Why go so far from help to that lone house?
Why open at the whisper and the knock?"

Six days ago when it was New Year's day,
We bent above the fire and talked of him,
What he should do when he was grown and
great,

Violante, Pietro, each had given the arm
I leant on, to walk by, from couch to chair
And fireside,—laughed, as I lay safe at last,
"Pompilia's march from bed to board is
made,

Pompilia back again and with a babe,
Shall one day lend his arm and help her
walk!"

Then we all wished each other more New
Years.

Pietro began to scheme—"Our cause is
gained;

The law is stronger than a wicked man:
Let him henceforth go his way, leave us ours!
We will avoid the city, tempt no more
The greedy ones by feasting and parade,—
Live at the other villa, we know where,
Still farther off, and we can watch the babe
Grow fast in the good air; and wood is cheap
And wine sincere outside the city gate.

I still have two or three old friends will grope
Their way along the mere half-mile of road,
With staff and lantern on a moonless night
When one needs talk: they'll find me, never
fear,

And I'll find them a flask of the old sort yet!"
 Violante said, "You chatter like a crow:
 Pompilia tires o' the tattle, and shall to bed:
 Do not too much the first day,—somewhat
 more

To-morrow, and, the next, begin the cape
 And hood and coat! I have spun wool
 enough."

Oh what a happy friendly eve was that!

And, next day, about noon, out Pietro
 went—

He was so happy and would talk so much,
 Until Violante pushed and laughed him forth
 Sight-seeing in the cold,—“So much to see
 I' the churches! Swathe your throat three
 times!” she cried,

“And, above all, beware the slippery ways,
 And bring us all the news by supper-time!”
 He came back late, laid by cloak, staff and
 hat,

Powdered so thick with snow it made us
 laugh,

Rolled a great log upon the ash o' the hearth,
 And bade Violante treat us to a flask,
 Because he had obeyed her faithfully,
 Gone sight-see through the seven, and found
 no church

To his mind like San Giovanni—“There's the
 fold,

And all the sheep together, big as cats!
 And such a shepherd, half the size of life,
 Starts up and hears the angel”—when, at the
 door,

A tap: we started up: you know the rest.

Pietro at least had done no harm, I know;
 Nor even Violante, so much harm as makes
 Such revenge lawful. Certainly she erred—
 Did wrong, how shall I dare say otherwise?—
 In telling that first falsehood, buying me
 From my poor faulty mother at a price,
 To pass off upon Pietro as his child.

If one should take my babe, give him a name,
 Say he was not Gaetano and my own,
 But that some other woman made his mouth
 And hands and feet,—how very false were
 that!

No good could come of that; and all harm
 did.

Yet if a stranger were to represent
 “Needs must you either give your babe to me
 And let me call him mine forevermore,
 Or let your husband get him”—ah, my God,

That were a trial I refuse to face!

Well, just so here: it proved wrong but
 seemed right

To poor Violante—for there lay, she said,
 My poor real dying mother in her rags,
 Who put me from her with the life and all,
 Poverty, pain, shame and disease at once,
 To die the easier by what price I fetched—
 Also (I hope) because I should be spared
 Sorrow and sin,—why may not that have
 helped?

My father,—he was no one, any one,—
 The worse, the likelier,—call him,—he who
 came,

Was wicked for his pleasure, went his way,
 And left no trace to track by; there remained
 Nothing but me, the unnecessary life,
 To catch up or let fall,—and yet a thing
 She could make happy, be made happy with,
 This poor Violante,—who would frown there-
 at?

Well, God, you see! God plants us where we
 grow.

It is not that, because a bud is born
 At a wild brier's end, full i' the wild beast's
 way,

We ought to pluck and put it out of reach
 On the oak-tree top,—say, “There the bud
 belongs!”

She thought, moreover, real lies were lies
 told

For harm's sake; whereas this had good at
 heart,

Good for my mother, good for me, and good
 For Pietro who was meant to love a babe,
 And needed one to make his life of use,
 Receive his house and land when he should
 die.

Wrong, wrong, and always wrong! how
 plainly wrong!

For see, this fault kept pricking, as faults do,
 All the same at her heart: this falsehood
 hatched,

She could not let it go nor keep it fast.
 She told me so,—the first time I was found
 Locked in her arms once more after the pain,
 When the nuns let me leave them and go
 home,

And both of us cried all the cares away,—
 This it was set her on to make amends,¹

¹Amends to Pompilia, by securing for her a station
 about which there should be no ambiguity.

This brought about the marriage—simply this!

Do let me speak for her you blame so much!
When Paul, my husband's brother, found me out,

Heard there was wealth for who should marry me,

So, came and made a speech to ask my hand
For Guido,—she, instead of piercing straight
Through the pretense to the ignoble truth,
Fancied she saw God's very finger point,
Designate just the time for planting me
(The wild-brier slip she plucked to love and wear)

In soil where I could strike real root, and grow,

And get to be the thing I called myself:
For, wife and husband are one flesh, God says,¹

And I, whose parents seemed such and were none,

Should in a husband have a husband now,
Find nothing, this time, but was what it seemed,

—All truth and no confusion any more.

I know she meant all good to me, all pain
To herself,—since how could it be aught but pain

To give me up, so, from her very breast,
The wilding flower-tree-branch that, all those years,

She had got used to feel for and find fixed?
She meant well: has it been so ill i' the main?

That is but fair to ask: one cannot judge
Of what has been the ill or well of life,
The day that one is dying,—sorrows change
Into not altogether sorrow-like;

I do see strangeness but scarce misery,
Now it is over, and no danger more.

My child is safe; there seems not so much pain.

It comes, most like, that I am just absolved,
Purged of the past, the foul in me, washed fair,—

One cannot both have and not have, you know.—

Being right now, I am happy and color things.

Yes, everybody that leaves life sees all
Softened and bettered: so with other sights:
To me at least was never evening yet

But seemed far beautifuller than its day,
For past is past.

There was a fancy came,
When somewhere, in the journey with my friend,

We stepped into a hovel to get food;
And there began a yelp here, a bark there,—
Misunderstanding creatures that were wroth
And vexed themselves and us till we retired.
The hovel is life: no matter what dogs bit
Or cat scratched in the hovel I break from,
All outside is lone field, moon and such peace—

Flowing in, filling up as with a sea
Whereon comes Someone, walks fast on the white,

Jesus Christ's self, Don Celestine declares,
To meet me and calm all things back again.

Beside, up to my marriage, thirteen years
Were, each day, happy as the day was long:
This may have made the change too terrible.
I know that when Violante told me first
The cavalier—she meant to bring next morn,
Whom I must also let take, kiss my hand—
Would be at San Lorenzo the same eve
And marry me,—which over, we should go
Home both of us without him as before,
And, till she bade speak, I must hold my tongue,

Such being the correct way with girl-brides,
From whom one word would make a father blush,—

I know, I say, that when she told me this,
—Well, I no more saw sense in what she said
Than a lamb does in people clipping wool;
Only lay down and let myself be clipped.
And when next day the cavalier who came—
(Tisbe had told me that the slim young man
With wings at head, and wings at feet, and sword

Threatening a monster, in our tapestry,
Would eat a girl else,²—was a cavalier)—
When he proved Guido Franceschini,—old
And nothing like so tall as I myself,
Hook-nosed and yellow in a bush of beard,
Much like a thing I saw on a boy's wrist,
He called an owl and used for catching birds,—

And when he took my hand and made a smile—

¹Genesis, ii, 24; St. Mark, x, 8.

²Perseus rescuing Andromeda.

Why, the uncomfortableness of it all
Seemed hardly more important in the case
Than—when one gives you, say, a coin to
spend—

Its newness or its oldness; if the piece
Weigh properly and buy you what you wish,
No matter whether you get grime or glare!
Men take the coin, return you grapes and
figs.

Here, marriage was the coin, a dirty piece
Would purchase me the praise of those I
loved:

About what else should I concern myself?

So, hardly knowing what a husband meant,
I supposed this or any man would serve,
No whit the worse for being so uncouth:

For I was ill once and a doctor came
With a great ugly hat, no plume thereto,
Black jerkin and black buckles and black
sword,

And white sharp beard over the ruff in front,
And oh so lean, so sour-faced and austere!—
Who felt my pulse, made me put out my
tongue,

Then oped a phial, dripped a drop or two
Of a black bitter something,—I was cured!
What mattered the fierce beard or the grim
face?

It was the physic beautified the man,
Master Malpichi,¹—never met his match
In Rome, they said,—so ugly all the same!

However, I was hurried through a storm,
Next dark eve of December's dearest day—
How it rained!—through our street and the
Lion's-mouth

And the bit of Corso,—cloaked round, covered close,

I was like something strange or contraband,—

Into blank San Lorenzo, up the aisle,
My mother keeping hold of me so tight,
I fancied we were come to see a corpse
Before the altar which she pulled me toward.
There we found waiting an unpleasant priest
Who proved the brother, not our parish
friend,

But one with mischief-making mouth and eye,
Paul, whom I know since to my cost. And
then

I heard the heavy church-door lock out help
Behind us: for the customary warmth,
Two tapers shivered on the altar. "Quick—
Lose no time!" cried the priest. And
straightway down

From . . . what's behind the altar where
he hid—

Hawk-nose and yellowness and bush and all,
Stepped Guido, caught my hand, and there
was I

O' the chancel, and the priest had opened
book,

Read here and there, made me say that and
this,

And after, told me I was now a wife,
Honored indeed, since Christ thus weds the
Church,

And therefore turned he water into wine,
To show I should obey my spouse like Christ.
Then the two slipped aside and talked apart,
And I, silent and scared, got down again
And joined my mother, who was weeping
now.

Nobody seemed to mind us any more,
And both of us on tiptoe found our way
To the door which was unlocked by this, and
wide.

When we were in the street, the rain had
stopped,

All things looked better. At our own house-
door,

Violante whispered, "Not one syllable
To Pietro! Girl-brides never breathe a
word!"

"—Well treated to a wetting, draggel-tails!"
Laughed Pietro as he opened—"Very near
You made me brave the gutter's roaring sea
To carry off from roost old dove and young,
Trussed up in church, the cote, by me, the
kite!

What do these priests mean, praying folk to
death

On stormy afternoons, with Christmas close
To wash our sins off nor require the rain?"
Violante gave my hand a timely squeeze,
Madonna saved me from immodest speech,
I kissed him and was quiet, being a bride.

When I saw nothing more, the next three
weeks,

Of Guido—"Nor the Church sees Christ"
thought I:

"Nothing is changed however, wine is wine
And water only water in our house.

¹He was the greatest biologist of his age. He came to Rome in 1691 to be physician to the Pope, and died in 1694.

Nor did I see that ugly doctor since
That cure of the illness: just as I was cured,
I am married,—neither scarecrow will re-
turn.”

“Three weeks, I chuckled—“How would
Giulia stare,
And Tecla smile and Tisbe laugh outright,
Were it not impudent for brides to talk!”—
Until one morning, as I sat and sang
At the broidery-frame alone i’ the chamber,
—loud

Voices, two, three together, sobbings too,
And my name, “Guido,” “Paolo,” flung like
stones

From each to the other! In I ran to see.
There stood the very Guido and the priest
With sly face,—formal but nowise afraid,—
While Pietro seemed all red and angry, scarce
Able to stutter out his wrath in words;
And this it was that made my mother sob,
As he reproached her—“You have murdered
us,

Me and yourself and this our child beside!”
Then Guido interposed, “Murdered or not,
Be it enough your child is now my wife!
I claim and come to take her.” Paul put in,
“Consider—kinsman, dare I term you so?—
What is the good of your sagacity
Except to counsel in a strait like this?
I guarantee the parties man and wife
Whether you like or loathe it, bless or ban,
May spilt milk be put back within the bowl—
The done thing, undone? You, it is, we look
For counsel to, you fitliest will advise!
Since milk, though spilt and spoilt, does
marble good,

Better we down on knees and scrub the floor,
Than sigh, ‘the waste would make a sylla-
bub!’¹

Help us so turn disaster to account,
So predispose the groom, he needs shall grace
The bride with favor from the very first,
Not begin marriage an embittered man!”
He smiled,—the game so wholly in his hands!
While fast and faster sobbed Violante—“Ay,
All of us murdered, past averting now!
O my sin, O my secret!” and such like.

Then I began to half surmise the truth;
Something had happened, low, mean, under-
hand,

¹A dish made by mixing wine with milk, forming a soft curd.

False, and my mother was to blame, and I
To pity, whom all spoke of, none addressed:
I was the chattel that had caused a crime.
I stood mute,—those who tangled must
untie

The embroilment. Pietro cried, “With-
draw, my child!

She is not helpful to the sacrifice
At this stage,—do you want the victim by
While you discuss the value of her blood?
For her sake, I consent to hear you talk:
Go, child, and pray God help the innocent!”

I did go and was praying God, when came
Violante, with eyes swollen and red enough,
But movement on her mouth for make-
believe

Matters were somehow getting right again.
She bade me sit down by her side and hear.
“You are too young and cannot understand,
Nor did your father understand at first.

I wished to benefit all three of us,
And when he failed to take my meaning,—
why,

I tried to have my way at unaware—
Obtained him the advantage he refused.
As if I put before him wholesome food
Instead of broken victual,—he finds change
I’ the viands, never cares to reason why,
But falls to blaming me, would fling the
plate

From window, scandalize the neighborhood,
Even while he smacks his lips,—men’s way,
my child!

But either you have prayed him unperverse
Or I have talked him back into his wits:
And Paolo was a help in time of need,—
Guido, not much—my child, the way of men!
A priest is more a woman than a man,
And Paul did wonders to persuade. In
short,

Yes, he was wrong, your father sees and says;
My scheme was worth attempting: and
bears fruit,

Gives you a husband and a noble name,
A palace and no end of pleasant things.
What do you care about a handsome youth?
They are so volatile, and tease their wives!
This is the kind of man to keep the house.
We lose no daughter,—gain a son, that’s all:
For ’tis arranged we never separate,
Nor miss, in our gray time of life, the tints
Of you that color eve to match with morn.
In good or ill, we share and share alike,

And cast our lots into a common lap,
And all three die together as we lived!
Only, at Arezzo,—that's a Tuscan town,
Not so large as this noisy Rome, no doubt,
But older far and finer much, say folk,—
In a great palace, where you will be queen,
Know the Archbishop and the Governor,
And we see homage done you ere we die.
Therefore, be good and pardon!"—"Pardon
what?

You know things, I am very ignorant:
All is right if you only will not cry!"

And so an end! Because a blank begins
From when, at the word, she kissed me hard
and hot,

And took me back to where my father leaned
Opposite Guido—who stood eying him,
As eyes the butcher the cast panting ox
That feels his fate is come, nor struggles
more,—

While Paul looked archly on, pricked brow
at whiles

With the pen-point as to punish triumph
there,—

And said, "Count Guido, take your lawful
wife

Until death part you!"

All since is one blank,
Over and ended; a terrific dream.

It is the good of dreams—so soon they go!
Wake in a horror of heart-beats, you may—
Cry, "The dread thing will never from my
thoughts!"

Still, a few daylight doses of plain life,
Cock-crow and sparrow-chirp, or bleat and
bell

Of goats that trot by, tinkling, to be milked;
And when you rub your eyes awake and wide,
Where is the harm o' the horror? Gone!
So here.

I know I wake,—but from what? Blank, I
say!

This is the note of evil: for good lasts.
Even when Don Celestine bade "Search and
find!

For your soul's sake, remember what is past,
The better to forgive it,"—all in vain!
What was fast getting indistinct before,
Vanished outright. By special grace perhaps,
Between that first calm and this last four
years

Vanish,—one quarter of my life, you know.

I am held up, amid the nothingness,
By one or two truths only—thence I hang,
And there I live,—the rest is death or dream,
All but those points of my support. I think
Of what I saw at Rome once in the Square
O' the Spaniards, opposite the Spanish
House:¹

There was a foreigner had trained a goat,
A shuddering white woman of a beast,
To climb up, stand straight on a pile of sticks
Put close, which gave the creature room
enough:

When she was settled there, he, one by one,
Took away all the sticks, left just the four
Whereon the little hoofs did really rest,
There she kept firm, all underneath was air.
So, what I hold by, are my prayer to God,
My hope, that came in answer to the prayer,
Some hand would interpose and save me—
hand

Which proved to be my friend's hand:
and,—blest bliss,—

That fancy which began so faint at first,
That thrill of dawn's suffusion through my
dark,

Which I perceive was promise of my child,
The light his unborn face sent long before,—
God's way of breaking the good news to flesh.
That is all left now of those four bad years.
Don Celestine urged, "But remember more!
Other men's faults may help me find your
own.

I need the cruelty exposed, explained,
Or how can I advise you to forgive?"

He thought I could not properly forgive
Unless I ceased forgetting,—which is true:
For, bringing back reluctantly to mind
My husband's treatment of me,—by a light
That's later than my lifetime,² I review
And comprehend much and imagine more,
And have but little to forgive at last.
For now,—be fair and say,—is it not true
He was ill-used and cheated of his hope
To get enriched by marriage? Marriage
gave

Me and no money, broke the compact so:
He had a right to ask me on those terms,
As Pietro and Violante to declare
They would not give me: so the bargain
stood:

They broke it, and he felt himself aggrieved,

¹I.e., house of the Spanish ambassador.

²I.e., that has come to me on my deathbed.

Became unkind with me to punish them.
They said 'twas he began deception first,¹
Nor, in one point whereto he pledged him-
self,²

Kept promise: what of that, suppose it
were?

Echoes die off, scarcely reverberate
For ever,—why should ill keep echoing ill,
And never let our ears have done with noise?
Then my poor parents took the violent way
To thwart him,—he must needs retaliate,—
wrong,

Wrong, and all wrong,—better say, all blind!
As I myself was, that is sure, who else
Had understood the mystery: for his wife
Was bound in some sort to help somehow
there.

It seems as if I might have interposed,
Blunted the edge of their resentment so,
Since he vexed me because they first vexed
him;

"I will entreat them to desist, submit,
Give him the money and be poor in peace,—
Certainly not go tell the world: perhaps
• He will grow quiet with his gains."

Yes, say

Something to this effect and you do well!
But then you have to see first: I was blind.
That is the fruit of all such wormy ways,
The indirect, the unapproved of God:
You cannot find their author's end and aim,
Not even to substitute your good for bad,
Your straight for the irregular; you stand
Stupefied, profitless, as cow or sheep
That miss a man's mind; anger him just
twice

By trial at repairing the first fault.
Thus, when he blamed me, "You are a
coquette,

A lure-owl posturing to attract birds,
You look love-lures at theater and church,
In walk, at window!"—that, I knew, was
false:

But why he charged me falsely, whither
sought

To drive me by such charge,—how could I
know?

So, unaware, I only made things worse.
I tried to soothe him by abjuring walk,
Window, church, theater, for good and all,

As if he had been in earnest: that, you
know,

Was nothing like the object of his charge.
Yes, when I got my maid to supplicate
The priest, whose name she read when she
would read

Those feigned false letters I was forced to
hear

Though I could read no word of,—he should
cease

Writing,—nay, if he minded prayer of mine,
Cease from so much as even pass the street
Whereon our house looked,—in my ignorance
I was just thwarting Guido's true intent;
Which was, to bring about a wicked change
Of sport to earnest, tempt a thoughtless man
To write indeed, and pass the house, and
more,

Till both of us were taken in a crime.
He ought not to have wished me thus act lies,
Simulate folly: but—wrong or right, the
wish—

I failed to apprehend its drift. How plain
It follows,—if I fell into such fault,
He also may have overreached the mark,
Made mistake, by perversity of brain,
I' the whole sad strange plot, the grotesque
intrigue

To make me and my friend unself ourselves,
Be other man and woman than we were!
Think it out, you who have the time! for
me,—

I cannot say less; more I will not say
Leave it to God to cover and undo!
Only, my dullness should not prove too much!
—Not prove that in a certain other point
Wherein my husband blamed me,—and you
blame,

If I interpret smiles and shakes of head,—
I was dull too. Oh, if I dared but speak!
Must I speak? I am blamed that I forwent
A way to make my husband's favor come.
That is true: I was firm, withstood, re-
fused . . .

—Women as you are, how can I find the
words?

I felt there was just one thing Guido claimed
I had no right to give nor he to take;
We being in estrangement, soul from soul:
Till, when I sought help, the Archbishop
smiled,

Inquiring into privacies of life,
—Said I was blamable—(he stands for God)

¹By pretending to have a larger income than he had.
²The maintenance of Pietro and Violante at Arezzo.

Nowise entitled to exemption there.
Then I obeyed,—as surely had obeyed
Were the injunction "Since your husband
bids,
Swallow the burning coal he proffers you!"
But I did wrong, and he gave wrong advice
Though he were thrice Archbishop,—that, I
know!—

Now I have got to die and see things clear.
Remember I was barely twelve years old—
A child at marriage: I was let alone
For weeks, I told you, lived my child-life still
Even at Arezzo, when I woke and found
First . . . but I need not think of that again—
Over and ended! Try and take the sense
Of what I signify, if it must be so.
After the first, my husband, for hate's sake,
Said one eve, when the simpler cruelty
Seemed somewhat dull at edge and fit to bear,
"We have been man and wife six months
almost:

How long is this your comedy to last?
Go this night to my chamber, not your own!"
At which word, I did rush—most true the
charge—

And gain the Archbishop's house—he stands
for God—

And fall upon my knees and clasp his feet,
Praying him hinder what my estranged soul
Refused to bear, though patient of the rest:
"Place me within a convent," I implored—
"Let me henceforward lead the virgin life
You praise in her you bid me imitate!"
What did he answer? "Folly of ignorance!
Know, daughter, circumstances make or mar
Virginity,—'tis virtue or 'tis vice.
That which was glory in the Mother of God
Had been, for instance, damnable in Eve
Created to be mother of mankind.
Had Eve, in answer to her Maker's speech
'Be fruitful, multiply, replenish earth'—
Pouted 'But I choose rather to remain
Single'—why, she had spared herself forth-
with

Further probation by the apple and snake,
Been pushed straight out of Paradise! For
see—

If motherhood be qualified impure,
I catch you making God command Eve sin!
—A blasphemy so like these Molinists' ²

¹Genesis, i, 28.

²Followers of the teaching of Miguel de Molinos (1627-1696), a quietist. His teaching was condemned in a papal bull issued in 1687.

I must suspect you dip into their books."
Then he pursued "'Twas in your covenant!"

No! There my husband never used deceit.
He never did by speech nor act imply
"Because of our souls' yearning that we meet
And mix in soul through flesh, which yours
and mine

Wear and impress, and make their visible
selves,
—All which means, for the love of you and
me,

Let us become one flesh, being one soul!"
He only stipulated for the wealth;
Honest so far. But when he spoke as plain—
Dreadfully honest also—"Since our souls
Stand each from each, a whole world's width
between,

Give me the fleshly vesture I can reach
And rend and leave just fit for hell to
burn!"—

Why, in God's name, for Guido's soul's own
sake

Imperiled by polluting mine,—I say,
I did resist; would I had overcome!

My heart died out at the Archbishop's
smile;

—It seemed so stale and worn a way o' the
world,

As though 'twere nature frowning—"Here
is Spring,

The sun shines as he shone at Adam's fall,
The earth requires that warmth reach every-
where:

What, must your patch of snow be saved
forsooth

Because you rather fancy snow than flowers?"
Something in this style he began with me.

Last he said, savagely for a good man,
"This explains why you call your husband
harsh,

Harsh to you, harsh to whom you love.
God's Bread!

The poor Count has to manage a mere child
Whose parents leave untaught the simplest
things

Their duty was and privilege to teach,—
Goodwives' instruction, gossips' lore: they
laugh

And leave the Count the task,—or leave it
me!"

Then I resolved to tell a frightful thing.
"I am not ignorant,—know what I say,

Declaring this is sought for hate, not love.
Sir, you may hear things like almighty God.
I tell you that my housemate, yes—the
priest

My husband's brother, Canon Girolamo—
Has taught me what depraved and misnamed
love

Means, and what outward signs denote the
sin,

For he solicits me and says he loves,
The idle young priest with naught else to do.
My husband sees this, knows this, and lets
be.

Is it your counsel I bear this beside?"

"—More scandal, and against a priest this
time!

What, 'tis the Canon now?"—less snap-
pishly—

"Rise up, my child, for such a child you are,
The rod were too advanced a punishment!
Let's try the honeyed cake. A parable!
'Without a parable spake he not to them.'¹
There was a ripe round long black toothsome
fruit,

Even a flower-fig, the prime boast of May;
And, to the tree, said . . . either the spirit o'
the fig,

Or, if we bring in men, the gardener,
Archbishop of the orchard—had I time
To try o' the two which fits in best: indeed
It might be the Creator's self, but then
The tree should bear an apple, I suppose,—
Well, anyhow, one with authority said,
'Ripe fig, burst skin, regale the fig-pecker—
The bird whereof thou art a perquisite!'—
'Nay,' with a founce, replied the restif² fig,
'I much prefer to keep my pulp myself:
He may go breakfastless and dinnerless,
Supperless of one crimson seed, for me!'

So, back she flopped into her bunch of leaves.
He flew off, left her,—did the natural lord,—
And lo, three hundred thousand bees and
wasps

Found her out, feasted on her to the shuck:
Such gain the fig's that gave its bird no bite!
The moral,—fools elude their proper lot,
Tempt other fools, get ruined all alike.
Therefore go home, embrace your husband
quick!

Which if his Canon brother chance to see,
He will the sooner back to book again."

So, home I did go; so, the worst befell:

So, I had proof the Archbishop was just man,
And hardly that, and certainly no more.

For, miserable consequence to me,
My husband's hatred waxed nor waned at all,
His brother's boldness grew effrontery soon,
And my last stay and comfort in myself
Was forced from me: henceforth I looked to
God

Only, nor cared my desecrated soul
Should have fair walls, gay windows for the
world.

God's glimmer, that came through the ruin-
top,

Was witness why all lights were quenched
inside:

Henceforth I asked God counsel, not man-
kind.

So, when I made the effort, freed myself,
They said—"No care to save appearance
here!

How cynic,—when, how wanton, were
enough!"

—Adding, it all came of my mother's life—
My own real mother, whom I never knew,
Who did wrong (if she needs must have done
wrong)

Through being all her life, not my four years,
At mercy of the hateful: every beast
O' the field was wont to break that fountain
fence,

Trample the silver into mud so murk
Heaven could not find itself reflected there.
Now they cry, "Out on her, who, plashy
pool,

Bequeathed turbidity and bitterness
To the daughter-stream where Guido dipped
and drank!"

Well, since she had to bear this brand—let
me!

The rather do I understand her now,—
From my experience of what hate calls
love,—

Much love might be in what their love called
hate.

If she sold . . . what they call, sold . . . me, her
child—

I shall believe she hoped in her poor heart
That I at least might try be good and pure,
Begin to live untempted, not go doomed
And done with ere once found in fault, as she.
Oh and, my mother, it all came to this?

¹St. Matthew, xiii, 34.

²Stubborn.

Why should I trust those that speak ill of you,
When I mistrust who speaks even well of
them?

Why, since all bound to do me good, did
harm,

May not you, seeming as you harmed me
most,

Have meant to do most good—and feed your
child

From bramble-bush, whom not one orchard-
tree

But drew bough back from, nor let one fruit
fall?

This it was for you sacrificed your babe?
Gained just this, giving your heart's hope
away

As I might give mine, loving it as you,
If . . . but that never could be asked of me!

There, enough! I have my support again,
Again the knowledge that my babe was, is,
Will be mine only. Him, by death, I give
Outright to God, without a further care,—
But not to any parent in the world,—
So to be safe: why is it we repine?

What guardianship were safer could we
choose?

All human plans and projects come to
naught:

My life, and what I know of other lives,
Prove that: no plan nor project! God
shall care!

And now you are not tired? How patient
then

All of you,—oh yes, patient this long while
Listening, and understanding, I am sure!

Four days ago, when I was sound and well
And like to live, no one would understand.

People were kind, but smiled, "And what of
him,

Your friend, whose tonsure the rich dark-
brown hides?

There, there!—your lover, do we dream he
was?

A priest too—never were such naughtiness!
Still, he thinks many a long think, never fear,

After the shy pale lady,—lay so light
For a moment in his arms, the lucky one!"

And so on: wherefore should I blame you
much?

So we are made, such difference in minds,
Such difference too in eyes that see the
minds!

That man, you misinterpret and misprise—
The glory of his nature, I had thought,
Shot itself out in white light, blazed the
truth

Through every atom of his act with me:
Yet where I point you, through the crystal
shrine,

Purity in quintessence, one dew-drop,
You all desecrate a spider in the midst.

One says, "The head of it is plain to see,"
And one, "They are the feet by which I
judge,"

All say, "Those films were spun by nothing
else."

Then, I must lay my babe away with God,
Nor think of him again for gratitude.

Yes, my last breath shall wholly spend itself
In one attempt more to disperse the stain,

The mist from other breath fond mouths
have made,

About a lustrous and pellucid soul:

So that, when I am gone but sorrow stays,
And people need assurance in their doubt

If God yet have a servant, man a friend,
The weak a savior, and the vile a foe,—

Let him be present, by the name invoked,
Giuseppe-Maria Caponsacchi!

There,
Strength comes already with the utterance!
I will remember once more for his sake
The sorrow: for he lives and is belied.
Could he be here, how he would speak for me!

I had been miserable three drear years
In that dread palace and lay passive now,
When I first learned there could be such a
man.

Thus it fell: I was at a public play,
In the last days of Carnival last March,
Brought there I knew not why, but now
know well.¹

My husband put me where I sat, in front;
Then crouched down, breathed cold through
me from behind,

Stationed 't' the shadow,—none in front could
see,—

I, it was, faced the stranger-throng beneath,
The crowd with upturned faces, eyes one
stare,

Voices one buzz. I looked but to the stage,

¹She now knows that she was brought there as a lure
to Caponsacchi.

Whereon two lovers sang and interchanged
 "True life is only love, love only bliss:
 I love thee—thee I love!" then they
 embraced.

I looked thence to the ceiling and the walls,—
 Over the crowd, those voices and those
 eyes,—

My thoughts went through the roof and out,
 to Rome

On wings of music, waft of measured words,—
 Set me down there, a happy child again,
 Sure that to-morrow would be festa-day,
 Hearing my parents praise past festas more,
 And seeing they were old if I was young,
 Yet wondering why they still would end
 discourse

With "We must soon go, you abide your time,
 And,—might we haply see the proper friend
 Throw his arm over you and make you safe!"

Sudden I saw him; into my lap there fell
 A foolish twist of comfits, broke my dream
 And brought me from the air and laid me low,
 As ruined as the soaring bee that's reached
 (So Pietro told me at the Villa once)

By the dust-handful. There the comfits lay:
 I looked to see who flung them, and I faced
 This Caponsacchi, looking up in turn.
 Ere I could reason out why, I felt sure,
 Whoever flung them, his was not the hand,—
 Up rose the round face and good-natured
 grin

Of one who, in effect, had played the prank,
 From covert close beside the earnest face,—
 Fat waggish Conti, friend of all the world.
 He was my husband's cousin,¹ privileged
 To throw the thing: the other, silent, grave,
 Solemn almost, saw me, as I saw him.

There is a psalm Don Celestine recites,
 "Had I a dove's wings, how I fain would
 flee!"²

The psalm runs not "I hope, I pray for
 wings,"—

Not "If wings fall from heaven, I fix them
 fast,"—

Simply "How good it were to fly and rest,
 Have hope now, and one day expect content!
 How well to do what I shall never do!"

So I said, "Had there been a man like that,
 To lift me with his strength out of all strife

Into the calm, how I could fly and rest!
 I have a keeper in the garden here
 Whose sole employment is to strike me low
 If ever I, for solace, seek the sun.
 Life means with me successful feigning death,
 Lying stone-like, eluding notice so,
 Foregoing here the turf and there the sky.
 Suppose that man had been instead of this!"

Presently Conti laughed into my ear,
 —Had tripped up to the raised place where I
 sat—

"Cousin, I flung them brutishly and hard!
 Because you must be hurt, to look austere
 As Caponsacchi yonder, my tall friend
 A-gazing now. Ah, Guido, you so close?
 Keep on your knees, do! Beg her to forgive!
 My cornet³ battered like a cannon-ball.
 Good-by, I'm gone!"—nor waited the reply.

That night at supper, out my husband broke,
 "Why was that throwing, that buffoonery?
 Do you think I am your dupe? What man
 would dare

Throw comfits in a stranger lady's lap?
 'Twas knowledge of you bred such insolence
 In Caponsacchi; he dared shoot the bolt,
 Using that Conti for his stalking-horse.
 How could you see him this once and no
 more,

When he is always haunting hereabout
 At the street-corner or the palace-side,
 Publishing my shame and your impudence?
 You are a wanton,—I a dupe, you think?
 O Christ, what hinders that I kill her quick?"
 Whereat he drew his sword and feigned a
 thrust.

All this, now,—being not so strange to me,
 Used to such misconception day by day
 And broken-in to bear,—I bore, this time.
 More quietly than woman should perhaps;
 Repeated the mere truth and held my
 tongue.

Then he said, "Since you play the ignorant,
 I shall instruct you. This amour,—com-
 menced

Or finished or midway in act, all's one,—
 'Tis the town-talk; so my revenge shall be.
 Does he presume because he is a priest?
 I warn him that the sword I wear shall pink⁴

¹In the older and wider sense of the word. His brother was married to Guido's sister.

²Psalms, lv, 6.

³Paper-twist.

⁴Pierce.

His lily-scented cassock through and through,
Next time I catch him underneath your
eaves!"

But he had threatened with the sword so oft
And, after all, not kept his promise. All
I said was, "Let God save the innocent!
Moreover, death is far from a bad fate.
I shall go pray for you and me, not him;
And then I look to sleep, come death or,
worse,
Life." So, I slept.

There may have elapsed a week,
When Margherita,—called my waiting-maid,
Whom it is said my husband found too fair—
Who stood and heard the charge and the
reply,

Who never once would let the matter rest
From that night forward, but rang changes
still

On this the thrust and that the shame, and
how

Good cause for jealousy cures jealous fools,
And what a paragon was this same priest
She talked about until I stopped my ears,—
She said, "A week is gone; you comb your
hair,

Then go mope in a corner, cheek on palm,
Till night comes round again,—so, waste a
week

As if your husband menaced you in sport.
Have not I some acquaintance with his
tricks?

Oh no, he did not stab the serving-man
Who made and sang the rhymes about me
once!

For why? They sent him to the wars next
day.

Nor poisoned he the foreigner, my friend,
Who wagered on the whiteness of my
breast,—

The swarth skins of our city in dispute:
For, though he paid me proper compliment,
The Count well knew he was besotted with
Somebody else, a skin as black as ink,
(As all the town knew save my foreigner)—
He found and wedded presently,—"Why need
Better revenge?"—the Count asked. But
what's here?

A priest that does not fight, and cannot wed,
Yet must be dealt with! If the Count took
fire

For the poor pastime of a minute,—me—
What were the conflagration for yourself,

Countess and lady-wife and all the rest?
The priest will perish; you will grieve too
late:

So shall the city-ladies' handsomest
Frankest and liberalest gentleman
Die for you, to appease a scurvy dog
Hanging's too good for. Is there no escape?
Were it not simple Christian charity
To warn the priest be on his guard,—save
him

Assured death, save yourself from causing it?
I meet him in the street. Give me a glove,
A ring to show for token! Mum's the
word!"

I answered, "If you were, as styled, my maid,
I would command you: as you are, you say,
My husband's intimate,—assist his wife
Who can do nothing but entreat 'Be still!'
Even if you speak truth and a crime is
planned,

Leave help to God as I am forced to do!
There is no other help, or we should craze,
Seeing such evil with no human cure.

Reflect that God, who makes the storm
desist,

Can make an angry violent heart subside.
Why should we venture teach him govern-
ance?

Never address me on this subject more!"

Next night she said, "But I went, all the
same,

—Ay, saw your Caponsacchi in his house,
And come back stuffed with news I must
outpour.

I told him, 'Sir, my mistress is a stone:
Why should you harm her for no good you
get?

For you do harm her—prowl about our place,
With the Count never distant half the street,
Lurking at every corner, would you look!

'Tis certain she has witched you with a
spell.

Are there not other beauties at your beck?
We all know, Donna This and Monna That
Die for a glance of yours, yet here you gaze!
Go make them grateful, leave the stone its
cold!

And he—oh, he turned first white and then
red,

And then—"To her behest I bow myself,
Whom I love with my body and my soul:
Only a word i' the bowing! See, I write
One little word, no harm to see or hear!

Then, fear no further!' This is what he wrote.

I know you cannot read,—therefore, let me! 'My idol!' . . .

But I took it from her hand
And tore it into shreds. "Why, join the rest
Who harm me? Have I ever done you
wrong?"

People have told me 'tis you wrong myself:
Let it suffice I either feel no wrong
Or else forgive it,—yet you turn my foe!
The others hunt me and you throw a noose!"

She muttered, "Have your willful way!" I
slept.

Whereupon . . . no, I leave my husband out!
It is not to do him more hurt, I speak.
Let it suffice, when misery was most,
One day, I swooned and got a respite so.
She stooped as I was slowly coming to,
This Margherita, ever on my trace,
And whispered—"Caponsacchi!"

If I drowned,
But woke afloat i' the wave with upturned
eyes,
And found their first sight was a star! I
turned—

For the first time, I let her have her will,
Heard passively,—“The imposthume at
such head,
One touch, one lancet-puncture would
relieve,—

And still no glance the good physician's way
Who rids you of the torment in a trice!
Still he writes letters you refuse to hear.
He may prevent! your husband, kill himself,
So desperate and all fordone is he!

Just hear the pretty verse he made to-day!
A sonnet from Mirtillo. '*Peerless fair . . .*'
All poetry is difficult to read,

—The sense of it is, anyhow, he seeks
Leave to contrive you an escape from hell,
And for that purpose asks an interview.
I can write, I can grant it in your name,
Or, what is better, lead you to his house.
Your husband dashes you against the stones;
This man would place each fragment in a
shrine:

You hate him, love your husband!"

I returned,
"It is not true I love my husband,—no,
Nor hate this man. I listen while you speak,
—Assured that what you say is false, the
same:

Much as when once, to me a little child,
A rough gaunt man in rags, with eyes on fire,
A crowd of boys and idlers at his heels;
Rushed as I crossed the Square, and held my
head

In his two hands, 'Here's she will let me
speak!

You little girl, whose eyes do good to mine,
I am the Pope, am Sextus, now the Sixth;
And that Twelfth Innocent, proclaimed
to-day,²

Is Lucifer disguised in human flesh!
The angels, met in conclave, crowned me!"—
thus

He gibbered and I listened; but I knew
All was delusion, ere folk interposed,
'Unfasten him, the maniac!' Thus I know
All your report of Caponsacchi false,
Folly or dreaming: I have seen so much
By that adventure at the spectacle,
The face I fronted that one-first, last time:
He would belie it by such words and thoughts.
Therefore while you profess to show him me,
I ever see his own face. Get you gone!"

"—That will I, nor once open mouth
again,—

No, by Saint Joseph and the Holy Ghost!
On your head be the damage, so adieu!"

And so more days, more deeds I must forget,
Till . . . what a strange thing now is to declare!
Since I say anything, say all if true!

And how my life seems lengthened as to
serve!

It may be idle or inopportune,
But, true?—why, what was all I said but
truth,

Even when I found that such as are untrue
Could only take the truth in through a lie?
Now—I am speaking truth to the Truth's
self:

God will lend credit to my words this time.

It had got half through April. I arose
One vivid daybreak,—who had gone to bed

¹Anticipate.

²On 12 July, 1691. There has never [been a Pope
Sextus (or Sixtus) the Sixth.

In the old way my wont those last three
years,

Careless until, the cup drained, I should die.
The last sound in my ear, the over-night,
Had been a something let drop on the sly
In prattle by Margherita, "Soon enough
Gayeties end, now Easter's past: a week,
And the Archbishop gets him back to
Rome,—

Every one leaves the town for Rome, this
Spring,—

Even Caponsacchi, out of heart and hope,
Resigns himself and follows with the flock."
I heard this drop and drop like rain outside
Fast-falling through the darkness while she
spoke:

So had I heard with like indifference,
"And Michael's pair of wings will arrive first
At Rome, to introduce the company,
And bear him from our picture where he
fighths

Satan,—expect to have that dragon loose
And never a defender!"—my sole thought
Being still, as night came, "Done, another
day!

How good to sleep and so get nearer death!"—
When, what, first thing at daybreak, pierced
the sleep

With a summons to me? Up I sprang alive,
Light in me, light without me, everywhere
Change! A broad yellow sunbeam was let
fall

From heaven to earth,—a sudden drawbridge
lay,

Along which marched a myriad merry motes
Mocking the flies that crossed them and
recrossed

In rival dance, companions new-born too.
On the house-eaves, a dripping shag of weed
Shook diamonds on each dull gray lattice-
square,

As first one, then another bird leapt by,
And light was off, and lo was back again,
Always with one voice,—where are two such
joys?—

The blessed building-sparrow! I stepped
forth,
Stood on the terrace,—o'er the roofs, such
sky!

My heart sang, "I too am to go away,
I too have something I must care about,
Carry away with me to Rome, to Rome!

¹Browning refers in these lines to a fresco in the church of San Francesco at Arezzo.

The bird brings hither sticks and hairs and
wool,

And nowhere else i' the world; what fly breaks
rank,

Falls out of the procession that befits,
From window here to window there, with all
The world to choose,—so well he knows his
course?

I have my purpose and my motive too,
My march to Rome, like any bird or fly!
Had I been dead! How right to be alive!
Last night I almost prayed for leave to die,
Wished Guido all his pleasure with the sword
Or the poison,—poison, sword, was but a
trick,

Harmless, may God forgive him the poor jest!
My life is charmed, will last till I reach Rome!
Yesterday, but for the sin,—ah, nameless be
The deed I could have dared against myself!
Now—see if I will touch an unripe fruit,
And risk the health I want to have and use!
Not to live, now, would be the wickedness,—
For life means to make haste and go to Rome
And leave Arezzo, leave all woes at once!"

Now, understand here, by no means mistake!
Long ago had I tried to leave that house
When it seemed such procedure would stop
sin;

And still failed more the more I tried—at
first

The Archbishop, as I told you,—next, our
lord

The Governor,—indeed I found my way,
I went to the great palace where he rules,
Though I knew well 'twas he who,—when I
gave

A jewel or two, themselves had given me,
Back to my parents,—since they wanted
bread,

They who had never let me want a nosegay,—
he

Spoke of the jail for felons, if they kept
What was first theirs, then mine, so doubly
theirs,

Though all the while my husband's most of
all!

I knew well who had spoke the word wrought
this:²

Yet, being in extremity, I fled
To the Governor, as I say,—scarce opened lip
When—the cold cruel snicker close behind—

²It was Guido.

Guido was on my trace, already there,
Exchanging nod and wink for shrug and smile,
And I—pushed back to him and, for my pains,
Paid with . . . but why remember what is past?

*I sought out a poor friar the people call
The Roman, and confessed my sin which
came

Of their sin,—that fact could not be re-
pressed,—

The frightfulness of my despair in God:
And feeling, through the grate, his horror
shake,

Implored him, "Write for me who cannot
write,

Apprise my parents, make them rescue me!
You bid me be courageous and trust God:
Do you in turn dare somewhat, trust and
write,

'Dear friends, who used to be my parents
once,

And now declare you have no part in me,
This is some riddle I want wit to solve,
Since you must love me with no difference.
Even suppose you altered,—there's your
hate,

To ask for: hate of you two dearest ones
I shall find liker love than love found here,
If husbands love their wives. Take me away
And hate me as you do the gnats and fleas,
Even the scorpions! How I shall rejoice!"
Write that and save me!" And he promised
—wrote

Or did not write; things never changed at
all:

He was not like the Augustinian here!
Last, in a desperation I appealed
To friends, whoever wished me better days,
To Guillichini, that's of kin,¹—"What, I—
Travel to Rome with you? A flying gout
Bids me deny my heart and mind my leg!"
Then I tried Conti, used to brave—laugh back
The lowering thunder when his cousin scowled
At me protected by his presence: "You—
Who well know what you cannot save me
from,—

Carry me off! What frightens you, a
priest?"

He shook his head, looked grave—"Above
my strength!

Guido has claws that scratch, shows feline
teeth;

A formidabler foe than I dare fret:

Give me a dog to deal with, twice the size!
Of course I am a priest and Canon too,
But . . . by the bye . . . though both, not quite
so bold

As he, my fellow-Canon, brother-priest,
The personage in such ill odor here
Because of the reports—pure birth o' the
brain!

Our Caponsacchi, he's your true Saint George
To slay the monster, set the Princess free,
And have the whole High-Altar to himself:
I always think so when I see that piece
I' the Pieve,² that's his church and mine,
you know:

Though you drop eyes at mention of his
name!"

That name had got to take a half-grotesque
Half-ominous, wholly enigmatic sense,
Like any by-word, broken bit of song
Born with a meaning, changed by mouth and
mouth

That mix it in a sneer or smile, as chance
Bids, till it now means naught but ugliness
And perhaps shame.

—All this intends to say,

That, over-night, the notion of escape
Had seemed distemper, dreaming; and the
name,—

Not the man, but the name of him, thus
made

Into a mockery and disgrace,—why, she
Who uttered it persistently, had laughed,
"I name his name, and there you start and
wince

As criminal from the red tongs' touch!"—
yet now,

Now, as I stood letting morn bathe me bright,
Choosing which butterfly should bear my
news,—

The white, the brown one, or that tinier
blue,—

The Margherita, I detested so,
In she came—"The fine day, the good
Spring time!

What, up and out at window? That is best.
No thought of Caponsacchi?—who stood
there

All night on one leg, like the sentry crane,
Under the pelting of your water-spout—
Looked last look at your lattice ere he leave

²A picture of St. George by Vasari.

¹He was related to Guido.

Our city, bury his dead hope at Rome.
 Ay, go to looking-glass and make you fine,
 While he may die ere touch one least loose
 hair
 You drag at with the comb in such a rage!"

I turned—"Tell Caponsacchi he may come!"
 "Tell him to come? Ah, but, for charity,
 A truce to fooling! Come? What,—come
 this eve?"

Peter and Paul! But I see through the trick!
 Yes, come, and take a flower-pot on his head,
 Flung from your terrace! No joke, sincere
 truth?"

How plainly I perceived hell flash and fade
 O' the face of her,—the doubt that first paled
 joy,

Then, final reassurance I indeed
 Was caught now, never to be free again!
 What did I care?—who felt myself of force
 To play with silk, and spurn the horsehair-
 springe.¹

"But—do you know that I have bade him
 come,
 And in your own name? I presumed so
 much,
 Knowing the thing you needed in your heart.
 But somehow—what had I to show in proof?
 He would not come: half-promised, that
 was all,
 And wrote the letters you refused to read.
 What is the message that shall move him
 now?"

"After the Ave Maria, at first dark,
 I will be standing on the terrace, say!"

"I would I had a good long lock of hair
 Should prove I was not lying! Never mind!"

Off she went—"May he not refuse, that's
 all—
 Fearing a trick!"

I answered, "He will come."
 And, all day, I sent prayer like incense up
 To God the strong, God the beneficent,
 God ever mindful in all strife and strait,
 Who, for our own good, makes the need
 extreme,
 Till at the last he puts forth might and saves.
 An old rhyme came into my head and rang

¹The latter being hidden in the former.

Of how a virgin, for the faith of God,
 Hid herself, from the Paynims that pursued,
 In a cave's heart; until a thunderstone,
 Wrapped in a flame, revealed the couch and
 prey:

And they laughed—"Thanks to lightning,
 ours at last!"

And she cried, "Wrath of God, assert his
 love!"

Servant of God, thou fire, befriend his child!"
 And lo, the fire she grasped at, fixed its flash,
 Lay in her hand a calm cold dreadful sword
 She brandished till pursuers strewed the
 ground,

So did the souls within them die away,
 As o'er the prostrate bodies, sworded, safe,
 She walked forth to the solitudes and Christ:
 So should I grasp the lightning and be saved!

And still, as the day wore, the trouble grew
 Whereby I guessed there would be born a
 star,²

Until at an intense throe of the dusk,
 I started up, was pushed, I dare to say,
 Out on the terrace, leaned and looked at last
 Where the deliverer waited me: the same
 Silent and solemn face, I first descried
 At the spectacle, confronted mine once more.

So was that minute twice vouchsafed me, so
 The manhood, wasted then, was still at
 watch

To save me yet a second time: no change
 Here, though all else changed in the changing
 world!

I spoke on the instant, as my duty bade,
 In some such sense as this, whatever the
 phrase.

"Friend, foolish words were borne from you
 to me;
 Your soul behind them is the pure strong
 wind,
 Not dust and feathers which its breath may
 bear:

These to the witless seem the wind itself,
 Since proving thus the first of it they feel.
 If by mischance you blew offense my way,
 The straws are dropped, the wind desists no
 whit,

And how such strays were caught up in the
 street

²Caponsacchi.

And took a motion from you, why inquire?
I speak to the strong soul, no weak disguise.
If it be truth,—why should I doubt it
truth?—

You serve God specially, as priests are
bound,

And care about me, stranger as I am,
So far as wish my good, that—miracle
I take to imitate he wills you serve
By saving me,—what else can he direct?
Here is the service. Since a long while now,
I am in course of being put to death:

While death concerned nothing but me, I
bowed

The head and bade, in heart, my husband
strike.

Now I imperil something more, it seems,
Something that's trulier me than this myself,
Something I trust in God and you to save.
You go to Rome, they tell me: take me
there,

Put me back with my people!"

He replied—

The first word I heard ever from his lips,
All himself in it,—an eternity
Of speech, to match the immeasurable depth
O' the soul that then broke silence—"I am
yours."

So did the star rise, soon to lead my step,
Lead on, nor pause before it should stand still
Above the House o' the Babe,—my babe to
be,

That knew me first and thus made me know
him,

That had his right of life and claim on mine,
And would not let me die till he was born,
But pricked me at the heart to save us both,
Saying, "Have you the will? Leave God
the way!"

And the way was Caponsacchi—"mine,"
thank God!

He was mine, he is mine, he will be mine.

No pause i' the leading and the light! I
know,

Next night there was a cloud came, and not
he:

But I prayed through the darkness till it
broke

And let him shine. The second night, he
came.

"The plan is rash; the project desperate:
In such a flight needs must I risk your life,
Give food for falsehood, folly or mistake,
Ground for your husband's rancor and
revenge"—

So he began again, with the same face.
I felt that, the same loyalty—one star
Turning now red that was so white before—
One service apprehended newly: just
A word of mine and there the white was back!

"No, friend, for you will take me! 'Tis
yourself

Risk all, not I,—who let you, for I trust
In the compensating great God: enough!
I know you: when is it that you will come?"

"To-morrow at the day's dawn." Then I
heard

What I should do: how to prepare for
flight

And where to fly.

That night my husband bade

"—You, whom I loathe, beware you break
my sleep

This whole night! Couch beside me like the
corpse

I would you were!" The rest you know, I
think—

How I found Caponsacchi and escaped.

And this man, men call sinner? Jesus
Christ!

Of whom men said, with mouths Thyself
mad'st once,

"He hath a devil"¹—say he was Thy saint,
My Caponsacchi! Shield and show—un-
shroud

In Thine own time the glory of the soul
If aught obscure,—if ink-spot, from vile pens
Scribbling a charge against him—(I was glad
Then, for the first time, that I could not
write)—

Flirted his way, have flecked the blaze!

For me,

'Tis otherwise: let men take, sift my
thoughts

—Thoughts I throw like the flax for sun to
bleach!

I did pray, do pray, in the prayer shall die,
"Oh, to have Caponsacchi for my guide!"

¹St. John, vii, 20; viii, 48; and elsewhere.

Ever the face upturned to mine, the hand
 Holding my hand across the world,—a sense
 That reads, as only such can read, the mark
 God sets on woman, signifying so
 She should—shall peradventure—be divine;
 Yet 'ware, the while, how weakness mars the
 print
 And makes confusion, leaves the thing men
 see,
 —Not this man sees,—who from his soul,
 re-writes
 The obliterated charter,—love and strength
 Mending what's marred. "So kneels a
 votarist,
 Weeds some poor waste traditionary plot
 Where shrine once was, where temple yet
 may be,
 Purging the place but worshiping the while,
 By faith and not by sight, sight clearest so,—
 Such way the saints work,"—says Don
 Celestine.
 But I, not privileged to see a saint
 Of old when such walked earth with crown
 and palm,
 If I call "saint" what saints call something
 else—
 The saints must bear with me, impute the
 fault
 To a soul i' the bud, so starved by ignorance,
 Stinted of warmth, it will not blow this year
 Nor recognize the orb which Spring-flowers
 know.
 But if meanwhile some insect with a heart
 Worth floods of lazy music, spendthrift joy—
 Some fire-fly renounced Spring for my
 dwarfed cup,
 Crept close to me, brought luster for the
 dark,
 Comfort against the cold,—what though
 excess
 Of comfort should miscall the creature—sun?
 What did the sun to hinder while harsh hands
 Petal by petal, crude and colorless,
 Tore me? This one heart gave me all the
 Spring!

Is all told? There's the journey: and
 where's time

To tell you how that heart burst out in shine?
 Yet certain points do press on me too hard.¹
 Each place must have a name, though I
 forget:

¹Too hard to go unsaid.

How strange it was—there where the plain
 begins
 And the small river mitigates its flow—
 When eve was fading fast, and my soul sank
 And he divined what surge of bitterness,
 In overtaking me, would float me back
 Whence I was carried by the striding day—
 So,—“This gray place was famous once,
 said he—
 And he began that legend of the place
 As if in answer to the unspoken fear,
 And told me all about a brave man dead
 Which lifted me and let my soul go on!
 How did he know too—at that town's
 approach
 By the rock-side—that in coming near the
 signs
 Of life, the house-roofs and the church and
 tower,
 I saw the old boundary and wall o' the world
 Rise plain as ever round me, hard and cold
 As if the broken circlet joined again,
 Tightened itself about me with no break,—
 As if the town would turn Arezzo's self,—
 The husband there,—the friends my enemies
 All ranged against me, not an avenue
 To try, but would be blocked and drive me
 back
 On him,—this other, . . . oh the heart in that
 Did not he find, bring, put into my arms
 A new-born babe?—and I saw faces beam
 Of the young mother proud to teach me joy,
 And gossips round expecting my surprise
 At the sudden hole through earth that lets in
 heaven.
 I could believe himself by his strong will
 Had woven around me what I thought the
 world
 We went along in, every circumstance,
 Towns, flowers and faces, all things helped
 well!
 For, through the journey, was it natural
 Such comfort should arise from first to last
 As I look back, all is one milky way;
 Still bettered more, the more remembered, so
 Do new stars bud while I but search for old
 And fill all gaps i' the glory, and grow him—
 Him I now see make the shine everywhere
 Even at the last when the bewildered flesh
 The cloud of weariness about my soul
 Clogging too heavily, sucked down a
 sense,—
 Still its last voice was, “He will watch and
 care;

Let the strength go, I am content: he stays!"
 I doubt not he did stay and care for all—
 From that sick minute when the head swam
 • round,
 And the eyes looked their last and died on him,
 As in his arms he caught me, and, you say,
 Carried me in, that tragical red eve,
 And laid me where I next returned to life
 In the other red of morning, two red plates
 That crushed together, crushed the time
 between,
 And are since then a solid fire to me,—
 When in, my dreadful husband and the world
 Broke,—and I saw him, master, by hell's
 right,
 And saw my angel helplessly held back
 By guards that helped the malice—the lamb
 prone,
 The serpent towering and triumphant—then
 Came all the strength back in a sudden swell,
 I did for once see right, do right, give tongue
 The adequate protest: for a worm must
 • turn
 If it would have its wrong observed by God.
 I did spring up, attempt to thrust aside
 That ice-block 'twixt the sun and me, lay low
 The neutralizer of all good and truth.
 If I sinned so,—never obey voice more
 O' the Just and Terrible, who bids us—
 "Bear!"
 Not—"Stand by, bear to see my angels
 bear!"
 I am clear it was on impulse to serve God
 Not save myself,—no—nor my child unborn!
 Had I else waited patiently till now?—
 Who saw my old kind parents, silly-sooth!
 And too much trustful, for their worst of
 faults,
 Cheated, browbeaten, stripped and starved,
 cast out
 Into the kennel: I remonstrated,
 Then sank to silence, for,—their woes at end,
 Themselves gone,—only I was left to plague.
 If only I was threatened and belied,
 What matter? I could bear it and did bear;
 It was a comfort, still one lot for all:
 They were not persecuted for my sake
 And I, estranged, the single happy one.
 But when at last, all by myself I stood
 Obeying the clear voice which bade me rise,

Not for my own sake but my babe unborn,
 And take the angel's hand was sent to help—
 And found the old adversary athwart the
 path—
 Not my hand simply struck from the angel's,
 but
 The very angel's self made foul i' the face
 By the fiend who struck there,—that I would
 not bear,
 That only I resisted! So, my first
 And last resistance was invincible.
 Prayers move God; threats, and nothing
 else, move men!
 I must have prayed a man as he were God
 When I implored the Governor to right
 My parents' wrongs: the answer was a
 smile.
 The Archbishop,—did I clasp his feet
 enough,
 Hide my face hotly on them, while I told
 More than I dared make my own mother
 know?
 The profit was—compassion and a jest.
 This time, the foolish prayers were done with,
 right
 Used might, and solemnized the sport at
 once.
 All was against the combat: vantage, mine?
 The runaway avowed, the accomplice-wife,
 In company with the plan-contriving priest?
 Yet, shame thus rank and patent, I struck,
 bare,
 At foe from head to foot in magic mail,
 And off it withered, cobweb-armory
 Against the lightning! 'Twas truth singed
 the lies
 And saved me, not the vain sword nor weak
 speech!
 You see, I will not have the service fail!
 I say, the angel saved me: I am safe!
 Others may want and wish, I wish nor want
 One point o' the circle plainer, where I stand
 Traced round about with white to front the
 world.
 What of the calumny I came across,
 What o' the way to the end?—the end
 crowns all.
 The judges judged aright i' the main, gave
 me
 The uttermost of my heart's desire, a truce
 From torture and Arezzo, balm for hurt,
 With the quiet nuns,—God recompense the
 good!

¹Unsophisticated.

Who said and sang away the ugly past.
And, when my final fortune was revealed,
What safety, while, amid my parents' arms,
My babe was given me! Yes, he saved my
babe:

It would not have peeped forth, the bird-like
thing,

Through that Arezzo noise and trouble: back
Had it returned nor ever let me see!

But the sweet peace cured all, and let me live
And give my bird the life among the leaves
God meant him! Weeks and months of
quietude,

I could lie in such peace and learn so much—
Begin the task, I see how needful now,
Of understanding somewhat of my past,—
Know life a little, I should leave so soon.

Therefore, because this man restored my
soul,

All has been right; I have gained my gain,
enjoyed

As well as suffered,—nay, got foretaste too
Of better life beginning where this ends—
All through the breathing-while allowed me
thus,

Which let good premonitions reach my soul
Unthwarted, and benignant influence flow
And interpenetrate and change my heart,
Uncrossed by what was wicked,—nay,
unkind.

For, as the weakness of my time drew nigh,
Nobody did me one disservice more,
Spoke coldly or looked strangely, broke the
love

I lay in the arms of, till my boy was born,
Born all in love, with naught to spoil the
bliss

A whole long fortnight: in a life like mine
A fortnight filled with bliss is long and much.
All women are not mothers of a boy,
Though they live twice the length of my
whole life,

And, as they fancy, happily all the same.
There I lay, then, all my great fortnight long,
As if it would continue, broaden out
Happily more and more, and lead to heaven:
Christmas before me,—was not that a
chance?

I never realized God's birth before—
How he grew likest God in being born.
This time I felt like Mary, had my babe
Lying a little on my breast like hers.
So all went on till, just four days ago—
The night and the tap.

Oh, it shall be success

To the whole of our poor family! My
friends

... Nay, father and mother,—give me back
my word!

They have been rudely stripped of life
disgraced

Like children who must needs go clothed too
fine,

Carry the garb of Carnival in Lent.

If they too much affected frippery,

They have been punished and submit them-
selves,

Say no word: all is over, they see God
Who will not be extreme to mark their fault

Or he had granted respite: they are safe.

For that most woeful man my husband once
Who, needing respite, still draws vita
breath,

I—pardon him? So far as lies in me,

I give him for his good the life he takes,

Praying the world will therefore acquiesce.

Let him make God amends,—none, none to
me

Who thank him rather that, whereas strange
fate

Mockingly styled him husband and me wife

Himself this way at least pronounced divorce

Blotted the marriage-bond: this blood o
mine

Flies forth exultingly at any door,

Washes the parchment white, and thank
the blow.

We shall not meet in this world nor the next

But where will God be absent? In his face

Is light, but in his shadow healing too:

Let Guido touch the shadow and be healed

And as my presence was importunate,—

My earthly good, temptation and a snare,—

Nothing about me but drew somehow down

His hate upon me,—somewhat so excused

Therefore, since hate was thus the truth o
him,—

May my evanishment forevermore

Help further to relieve the heart that cast

Such object of its natural loathing forth!

So he was made: he nowise made himself:

I could not love him, but his mother did.

His soul has never lain beside my soul;

But for the unresisting body,—thanks!

He burned that garment spotted by the flesh

Whatever he touched is rightly ruined
plague

It caught, and disinfection it had craved
Still but for Guido; I am saved through him
So as by fire; to him—thanks and farewell!

Even for my babe, my boy, there's safety
thence—

From the sudden death of me, I mean: we
poor

Weak souls, how we endeavor to be strong!
I was already using up my life,—

This portion, now, should do him such a
good,

This other go to keep off such an ill!

The great life; see, a breath and it is gone!

So is detached, so left all by itself

The little life, the fact which means so much.

Shall not God stoop the kindlier to his work,

His marvel of creation, foot would crush,

Now that the hand he trusted to receive

And hold it, lets the treasure fall perforce?

The better; he shall have in orphanage

His own way all the clearer: if my babe

Outlived the hour—and he has lived two

weeks—

It is through God who knows I am not by.

Who is it makes the soft gold hair turn black,

And sets the tongue, might lie so long at rest,

Trying to talk? Let us leave God alone!

Why should I doubt he will explain in time

What I feel now, but fail to find the words?

My babe nor was, nor is, nor yet shall be

Count Guido Franceschini's child at all—

Only his mother's, born of love not hate!

So shall I have my rights in after-time.

It seems absurd, impossible to-day;

So seems so much else, not explained but
known!

Ah! Friends, I thank and bless you every
one!

No more now: I withdraw from earth and
man

To my own soul, compose myself for God.

Well, and there is more! Yes, my end of
breath

Shall bear away my soul in being true!

He is still here, not outside with the world,

Here, here, I have him in his rightful place!

'Tis now, when I am most upon the move,

I feel for what I verily find—again

The face, again the eyes, again, through all,

The heart and its immeasurable love

Of my one friend, my only, all my own,

Who put his breast between the spears and
me.

Ever with Caponsacchi! Otherwise
Here alone would be failure, loss to me—

How much more loss to him, with life
debarred

From giving life, love locked from love's
display,

The day-star stopped its task that makes
night morn!

O lover of my life, O soldier-saint,

No work begun shall ever pause for death!

Love will be helpful to me more and more

I' the coming course, the new path I must
tread—

My weak hand in thy strong hand, strong for
that!

Tell him that if I seem without him now,

That's the world's insight! Oh, he under-
stands!

He is at Civita—do I once doubt

The world again is holding us apart?

He had been here, displayed in my behalf

The broad brow that reverberates the truth,

And flashed the word God gave him, back to
man!

I know where the free soul is flown! My
fate

Will have been hard for even him to bear:

Let it confirm him in the trust of God,

Showing how holily he dared the deed!

And, for the rest,—say, from the deed, no
touch

Of harm came, but all good, all happiness,

Not one faint fleck of failure! Why explain?

What I see, oh, he sees and how much more!

Tell him,—I know not wherefore the true
word

Should fade and fall unuttered at the last—

It was the name of him I sprang to meet

When came the knock, the summons and the
end.

"My great heart, my strong hand are back
again!"

I would have sprung to these, beckoning
across

Murder and hell gigantic and distinct

O' the threshold, posted to exclude me
heaven:

He is ordained to call and I to come!

Do not the dead wear flowers when dressed
for God?

Say,—I am all in flowers from head to foot!

Say,—not one flower of all he said and did,

Might seem to flit unnoticed, fade unknown,
But dropped a seed, has grown a balsam-
tree

Whereof the blossoming perfumes the place
At this supreme of moments! He is a priest;
He cannot marry therefore, which is right:
I think he would not marry if he could.
Marriage on earth seems such a counterfeit,
Mere imitation of the inimitable:
In heaven we have the real and true and
sure.

'Tis there they neither marry nor are given
In marriage but are as the angels:¹ right,
Oh how right that is, how like Jesus Christ
To say that! Marriage-making for the
earth,

With gold so much,—birth, power, repute so
much,

Or beauty, youth so much, in lack of these!
Be as the angels rather, who, apart,
Know themselves into one, are found at
length

Married, but marry never, no, nor give
In marriage; they are man and wife at once
When the true time is: here we have to wait
Not so long neither! Could we by a wish
Have what we will and get the future now,
Would we wish aught done undone in the
past?

So, let him wait God's instant men call years;
Meantime hold hard by truth and his great
soul,

Do out the duty! Through such souls alone
God stooping shows sufficient of his light
For us i' the dark to rise by. And I rise.

NEVER THE TIME AND THE PLACE²

NEVER the time and the place
And the loved one all together!
This path—how soft to pace!

This May—what magic weather!
Where is the loved one's face?

In a dream that loved one's face meets mine,
But the house is narrow, the place is bleak
Where, outside, rain and wind combine
With a furtive ear, if I strive to speak,
With a hostile eye at my flushing cheek,

¹St. Matthew, xxii, 30, etc.

²Published in 1883.

With a malice that marks each word, each
sign!

O enemy sly and serpentine,
Uncoil thee from the waking man!
Do I hold the Past

Thus firm and fast
Yet doubt if the Future hold I can?
This path so soft to pace shall lead
Through the magic of May to herself
indeed!

Or narrow if needs the house must be,
Outside are the storms and strangers
we—

Oh, close, safe, warm sleep I and she,
—I and she!

EPILOGUE³

AT THE midnight in the silence of the sleep-
time,

When you set your fancies free,
Will they pass to where—by death, for
think, imprisoned—

Low he lies who once so loved you, who
you loved so,
—Pity me?

Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mistake
What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the
unmanly?

Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did
drivel

—Being—who?

One who never turned his back but march-
breast forward,

Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted,
wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight bet-
Sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's wor-
time

Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as eith-
should be,
"Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed,—fight
fare ever

There as here!"

³Published in 1889. The poem concludes *Asolando*, the last volume Browning published.

JOHN RUSKIN (1819-1900)

Ruskin's father was a wine-merchant dealing in sherry. He was a Scotchman, a man of unusual practical ability and of considerable fortune, with conventional views, but possessed of fine taste. He married his first cousin, a woman of great power, with a harsh and deeply religious nature. To them John Ruskin, their only child, was born in London on 8 February, 1819. Few youths have been so completely and so long subjected to the influences of their homes as was Ruskin, and something of the general character of his early years may be gathered from the brief autobiographical passages printed below. After a somewhat irregular course of preparation he entered Christ Church College, Oxford, at the age of eighteen, as a gentleman-commoner. His work at Oxford was interrupted by bad health which forced him to spend a year and a half abroad, chiefly in Italy. He took his B. A. in May, 1842, receiving an honorary fourth class both in classics and in mathematics. His parents had expected him to become a clergyman, and he disappointed them by refusing either to take holy orders or to enter the sherry trade. What he was to do was not yet perhaps entirely clear to himself, yet he had been since boyhood persistently training himself for writing. Almost every day since his seventh year he had been writing poetry, and his exercises in prose composition had begun almost as early. Likewise he had been from youth an enthusiastic lover of the landscape art of J. M. W. Turner, convinced as he was that Turner alone of contemporary artists saw nature truly and painted what he saw, and at the age of seventeen he had written an eloquent, impassioned essay in defense of Turner against adverse criticism. Now, his academic career concluded and his future at least negatively determined, he settled down in the autumn and winter of 1842 to the writing of "Turner and the Ancients," as he at first intended to entitle his book. The title was later changed to *Modern Painters* and the volume was published anonymously in 1843. It caused a sensation in both the artistic and literary worlds, and it was almost immediately recognized that a new master had appeared. Ruskin was, indeed, by his successive volumes to work a veritable revolution in taste and to rise to a position of authority as an art-critic unexampled in England. What he did, said William Morris, was "to let a flood of daylight into the cloud of sham-twaddle which was once the whole substance of art-criticism." And he did this with an assurance, an eloquence, a wealth of ingenious illustration, and a splendor of language which fairly swept many contemporaries off their feet. The basis of his work, moreover, was exceedingly simple. He preached in his own way essentially the great lesson of Carlyle, by whom he was much influenced;—he preached that better than all things else in the world is truth. He asked of artists only that they should submit themselves, humbly and obediently, to the truth of nature, and told them that in this way, and in this way alone, they could discover the highest inspiration and learn how to use their pencils greatly.

Ruskin was twenty-four when the first volume of *Modern Painters* was published and, despite his manifest genius and his thoughtfulness above his years, he obviously had some things yet to learn. As new chapters in the history of art were opened up to him by travel and study the original plan of *Modern Painters* was changed and expanded, and in addition Ruskin was more than once drawn aside into other work, with the result that the fifth and final volume did not appear until 1860. In the intervening years occurred his unhappy marriage to Euphemia Chalmers Gray, which took place in April, 1848, and which was a few years later annulled on the petition of Mrs. Ruskin. In those years, too, he wrote the *Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849)—Truth, Beauty, Power, Sacrifice, Obedience, Labor, Memory—in which he did for the art of building what he had already done for painting, and the *Stones of Venice* (1851-1853), which is, so to say, a practical amplification of the *Seven Lamps*, applying its doctrine to the defense of Gothic architecture.

From the first Ruskin's art-criticism was a consideration of the conditions under which great works of art may come into being, and from the first Ruskin regarded the good, the true, and the beautiful as ultimately one in their nature. In other words, he taught that beauty is at bottom the concomitant or outgrowth of a right and true system of values, and that ugliness consequently must be the expression of a wrong or low or false system of values. And as he went on with his work he saw more and more clearly that this conviction implied that only a good man could be a great artist. Thus it was that the *Seven Lamps* was written to show, as he later explained, "that certain right states of temper and moral feeling were the magic powers by which all good architecture without exception had been produced. The *Stones of Venice* had, from beginning to end, no other aim than to show that the Gothic architecture of Venice had arisen out of, and indicated in all its features, a state of pure national faith and of domestic

virtue; and that its Renaissance architecture had arisen out of, and in all its features indicated, a state of concealed national infidelity and of domestic corruption." This, then, is the secret of Ruskin's transition in middle life from the rôle of art-critic to that of social reformer. The two are ordinarily thought of as very different activities, but in Ruskin the social reformer grew naturally, indeed inevitably, out of the art-critic, and to separate them from each other is in his case to misunderstand both. From the late eighteen-fifties until the close of his active life Ruskin gave himself increasingly to social work, and wrote, and spent his money, in the effort to arouse the upper classes to a sense of their responsibilities and to help the poor to rise out of the misery and ugliness which surrounded them. Some of the books which preserve the writings of this period are *Unto this Last*, *Munera Pulveris*, *Time and Tide*, *Fors Clavigera*, *Sesame and Lilies*, and *The Crown of Wild Olive*. In these books Ruskin no doubt often wrote rashly, as was indeed his habit in all his work, and he aroused bitter feeling which at the time seemed to go far towards destroying the reputation he had previously built up for himself. Time has, however, been remarkably on Ruskin's side, and it is to-day an astonishing and illuminating thing to count up for one's self the number of Ruskin's one-time social heresies which have since become accepted commonplaces.

In his later life Ruskin was for some years the Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford, where his lectures drew remarkable audiences. After his retirement from Oxford he wrote those autobiographical sketches which were published under the title *Præterita*. He died on 20 January, 1900. He had once said: "Life without industry is guilt, and industry without art is brutality," and this sentence sums up better than could any other words the meaning of all his work.

PRÆTERITA

EARLY READING AND SUMMER TRAVEL¹

I AM, and my father was before me, a violent Tory of the old school;—Walter Scott's school, that is to say, and Homer's. I name these two out of the numberless great Tory writers, because they were my own two masters. I had Walter Scott's novels, and the *Iliad* (Pope's translation), for constant reading when I was a child, on week-days: on Sunday, their effect was tempered by *Robinson Crusoe* and the *Pilgrim's Progress*; my mother having it deeply in her heart to make an evangelical clergyman of me. Fortunately, I had an aunt more evangelical than my mother; and my aunt gave me cold mutton for Sunday's dinner, which—as I much preferred it hot—greatly diminished the influence of the *Pilgrim's Progress*; and the end of the matter was, that I got all the noble imaginative teaching of Defoe and Bunyan, and yet—am not an evangelical clergyman.

I had, however, still better teaching than theirs, and that compulsorily, and every day of the week.

Walter Scott and Pope's Homer were reading of my own election, and my mother forced me, by steady daily toil, to learn long

chapters of the Bible by heart; as well as to read it every syllable through, aloud, hard names and all, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, about once a year: and to that discipline—patient, accurate, and resolute—I owe, not only a knowledge of the book, which I find occasionally serviceable, but much of my general power of taking pains, and the best part of my taste in literature. From Walter Scott's novels I might easily, as I grew older, have fallen to other people's novels; and Pope might, perhaps, have led me to take Johnson's English, or Gibbon's, as types of language; but once knowing the 32nd of Deuteronomy, the 119th Psalm, the 15th of 1st Corinthians, the Sermon on the Mount, and most of the Apocalypse, every syllable by heart, and having always a way of thinking with myself what words meant, it was not possible for me, even in the foolishness of youth, to write entirely superficial or formal English; and the affectation of trying to write like Hooker and George Herbert was the most innocent I could have fallen into.

From my own chosen masters, then, Scott and Homer, I learned the Toryism which my best after-thought has only served to confirm.

That is to say, a most sincere love of kings, and dislike of everybody who attempted to disobey them. Only, both by Homer and Scott, I was taught strange ideas about kings, which I find for the present much obsolete; for, I perceived that both the author of the *Iliad* and the author of *Waverley* made their

¹*Præterita* (things gone by) was published in chapters at irregular intervals from 1885 to 1889. This passage is from vol. I, chap. i, which consists of slightly revised passages from *Fors Clavigera*, written 1871–1875.

kings, or king-loving persons, do harder work than anybody else. Tydides or Idomeneus always killed twenty Trojans to other people's one, and Redgauntlet speared more salmon than any of the Solway fishermen;¹ and—which was particularly a subject of admiration to me—I observed that they not only did more, but in proportion to their doings *got* less, than other people—nay, that the best of them were even ready to govern for nothing! and let their followers divide any quantity of spoil or profit. Of late it has seemed to me that the idea of a king has become exactly the contrary of this, and that it has been supposed the duty of superior persons generally to govern less, and get more, than anybody else. So that it was, perhaps, quite as well that in those early days my contemplation of existent kingship was a very distant one.

The aunt who gave me cold mutton on Sundays was my father's sister: she lived at Bridge-end, in the town of Perth, and had a garden full of gooseberry-bushes, sloping down to the Tay, with a door opening to the water, which ran past it, clear-brown over the pebbles three or four feet deep; swift-eddyding,—an infinite thing for a child to look down into.

My father began business as a wine-merchant, with no capital, and a considerable amount of debts bequeathed him by my grandfather. He accepted the bequest, and paid them all before he began to lay by anything for himself,—for which his best friends called him a fool, and I, without expressing any opinion as to his wisdom, which I knew in such matters to be at least equal to mine, have written on the granite slab over his grave that he was “an entirely honest merchant.” As days went on he was able to take a house in Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, No. 54 (the windows of it, fortunately for me, commanded a view of a marvelous iron post, out of which the water-carts were filled through beautiful little trap-doors, by pipes like boa-constrictors; and I was never weary of contemplating that mystery, and the delicious dripping consequent); and as years went on, and I came to be four or five years

old, he could command a postchaise and pair for two months in the summer, by help of which, with my mother and me, he went the round of his country customers (who liked to see the principal of the house his own traveler); so that, at a jog-trot pace, and through the panoramic opening of the four windows of a postchaise, made more panoramic still to me because my seat was a little bracket in front (for we used to hire the chaise regularly for the two months out of Long Acre, and so could have it bracketed and pocketed as we liked), I saw all the high-roads, and most of the cross ones, of England and Wales; and great part of lowland Scotland, as far as Perth, where every other year we spent the whole summer: and I used to read the *Abbot* at Kinross, and the *Monastery* in Glen Farg, which I confused with “Glendearg,” and thought that the White Lady had as certainly lived by the streamlet in that glen of the Ochils, as the Queen of Scots in the island of Loch Leven.

To my farther great benefit, as I grew older, I thus saw nearly all the noblemen's houses in England; in reverent and healthy delight of uncovetous admiration,—perceiving, as soon as I could perceive any political truth at all, that it was probably much happier to live in a small house, and have Warwick Castle to be astonished at, than to live in Warwick Castle and have nothing to be astonished at; but that, at all events, it would not make Brunswick Square in the least more pleasantly habitable, to pull Warwick Castle down. And at this day, though I have kind invitations enough to visit America, I could not, even for a couple of months, live in a country so miserable as to possess no castles.

Nevertheless, having formed my notion of kinghood chiefly from the FitzJames of the *Lady of the Lake*, and of noblesse from the Douglas there, and the Douglas in *Marmion*, a painful wonder soon arose in my child-mind, why the castles should now be always empty. Tantallon was there; but no Archibald of Angus:—Stirling, but no Knight of Snowdown. The galleries and gardens of England were beautiful to see—but his Lordship and her Ladyship were always in town, said the housekeepers and gardeners. Deep yearning took hold of me for a kind of

¹For Diomed (son of Tydeus) see such a passage in Pope's *Iliad* as x, 560; for Idomeneus, xiii, 457. For Redgauntlet see Letter 4 of Scott's novel of the same name.

"Restoration," which I began slowly to feel that Charles the Second had not altogether effected, though I always wore a gilded oak-apple very piously in my button-hole on the 29th of May. It seemed to me that Charles the Second's Restoration had been, as compared with the Restoration I wanted, much as that gilded oak-apple to a real apple. And as I grew wiser, the desire for sweet pippins instead of bitter ones, and Living Kings instead of dead ones, appeared to me rational as well as romantic; and gradually it has become the main purpose of my life to grow pippins, and its chief hope, to see Kings.

DAILY LIFE AT HERNE HILL¹

WHEN I was about four years old my father found himself able to buy the lease of a house on Herne Hill, a rustic eminence four miles south of the "Standard in Cornhill";² of which the leafy seclusion remains, in all essential points of character, unchanged to this day: certain Gothic splendors, lately indulged in by our wealthier neighbors, being the only serious innovations; and these are so graciously concealed by the fine trees of their grounds, that the passing viator³ remains unappalled by them; and I can still walk up and down the piece of road between the Fox tavern and the Herne Hill station, imagining myself four years old.

Our house was the northernmost of a group which stand accurately on the top or dome of the hill, where the ground is for a small space level, as the snows are (I understand), on the dome of Mont Blanc; presently falling, however, in what may be, in the London clay formation, considered a precipitous slope, to our valley of Chamouni (or of Dulwich) on the east; and with a softer descent into Cold Harbor-lane on the west: on the south, no less beautifully declining to the dale of the Effra (doubtless shortened from Effrena, signifying the "Unbridled" river; recently, I regret to say, bricked over for the convenience of Mr. Biffin, chemist,

and others); while on the north, prolonged indeed with slight depression some half mile or so, and receiving, in the parish of Lambeth, the chivalric title of "Champion Hill," it plunges down at last to efface itself in the plains of Peckham, and the rural barbarism of Goose Green.

The group, of which our house was the quarter, consisted of two precisely similar partner-couples of houses, gardens and all to match; still the two highest blocks of buildings seen from Norwood on the crest of the ridge; so that the house itself, three-storied, with garrets above, commanded, in those comparatively smokeless days, a very notable view from its garret windows, of the Norwood hills on one side, and the winter sunrise over them; and of the valley of the Thames on the other, with Windsor telegraphically clear in the distance, and Harrow, conspicuous always in fine weather to open vision against the summer sunset. It had front and back garden in sufficient proportion to its size; the front, richly set with old evergreens, and well-grown lilac and laburnum; the back, seventy yards long by twenty wide, renowned over all the hill for its pears and apples, which had been chosen with extreme care by our predecessor (shame on me to forget the name of a man to whom I owe so much!)—and possessing also a strong old mulberry tree, a tall white-heart cherry tree, a black Kentish one, and an almost unbroken hedge, all round, of alternate gooseberry and currant bush; decked, in due season (for the ground was wholly beneficent), with magical splendor of abundant fruit: fresh green, soft amber, and rough-bristled crimson bending the spinous branches; clustered pearl and pendent ruby joyfully discoverable under the large leaves that looked like vine.

The differences of primal importance which I observed between the nature of this garden, and that of Eden, as I had imagined it, were, that, in this one, *all* the fruit was forbidden; and there were no companionable beasts: in other respects the little domain answered every purpose of Paradise to me; and the climate, in that cycle of our years, allowed me to pass most of my life in it. My mother never gave me more to learn than she knew I could easily get learned, if I set myself honestly to work, by twelve o'clock. She

¹From vol. I, chap. ii, the greater part of which consists of slightly revised passages from *Fors Clavigera*, written 1873-1875.

²A water-standard built in 1582 which stood near the junction of Cornhill with Leadenhall Street.

³Traveler.

never allowed anything to disturb me when my task was set; if it was not said rightly by twelve o'clock, I was kept in till I knew it, and in general, even when Latin Grammar came to supplement the Psalms, I was my own master for at least an hour before half-past one dinner, and for the rest of the afternoon.

My mother, herself finding her chief personal pleasure in her flowers, was often planting or pruning beside me, at least if I chose to stay beside *her*. I never thought of doing anything behind her back which I would not have done before her face; and her presence was therefore no restraint to me; but, also, no particular pleasure, for, from having always been left so much alone, I had generally my own little affairs to see after; and, on the whole, by the time I was seven years old, was already getting too independent, mentally, even of my father and mother; and, having nobody else to be dependent upon, began to lead a very small, perky, contented, conceited, Cock-Robinson-Crusoe sort of life, in the central point which it appeared to me (as it must naturally appear to geometrical animals) that I occupied in the universe.

This was partly the fault of my father's modesty; and partly of his pride. He had so much more confidence in my mother's judgment as to such matters than in his own, that he never ventured even to help, much less to cross her, in the conduct of my education; on the other hand, in the fixed purpose of making an ecclesiastical gentleman of me, with the superfinest of manners, and access to the highest circles of fleshly and spiritual society, the visits to Croydon, where I entirely loved my aunt,¹ and young baker-cousins, became rarer and more rare: the society of our neighbors on the hill could not be had without breaking up our regular and sweetly selfish manner of living; and on the whole, I had nothing animate to care for, in a childish way, but myself, some nests of ants, which the gardener would never leave undisturbed for me, and a sociable bird or two; though I never had the sense or perseverance to make one really tame. But that was partly because, if ever I managed to

bring one to be the least trustful of me, the cats got it.

Under these circumstances, what powers of imagination I possessed, either fastened themselves on inanimate things,—the sky, the leaves, and pebbles, observable within the walls of Eden,—or caught at any opportunity of flight into regions of romance, compatible with the objective realities of existence in the nineteenth century, within a mile and a quarter of Camberwell Green.

Herein my father, happily, though with no definite intention other than of pleasing me, when he found he could do so without infringing any of my mother's rules, became my guide. I was particularly fond of watching him shave; and was always allowed to come into his room in the morning (under the one in which I am now writing), to be the motionless witness of that operation. Over his dressing-table hung one of his own water-color drawings, made under the teaching of the elder Nasmyth; I believe, at the High School of Edinburgh. It was done in the early manner of tinting, which, just about the time when my father was at the High School, Dr. Munro² was teaching Turner; namely, in gray under-tints of Prussian blue and British ink, washed with warm color afterward on the lights. It represented Conway Castle, with its Frith, and, in the foreground, a cottage, a fisherman, and a boat at the water's edge.

When my father had finished shaving, he always told me a story about this picture. The custom began without any initial purpose of his, in consequence of my troublesome curiosity whether the fisherman lived in the cottage, and where he was going to in the boat. It being settled, for peace' sake, that he *did* live in the cottage, and was going in the boat to fish near the castle, the plot of the drama afterward gradually thickened; and became, I believe, involved with that of the tragedy of *Douglas*, and of the *Castle Specter*,³ in both of which pieces my father had performed in private theatricals, before

²Thomas Monro (1759-1833), a physician and an early patron of J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851), the landscape artist, who was responsible for Ruskin's beginning *Modern Painters*.

³The former by John Home (published in 1757), the latter by M. G. ("Monk") Lewis, played at Drury Lane Theater in 1798.

¹The sister of Ruskin's mother, who married a baker in Croydon named Richardson.

my mother, and a select Edinburgh audience, when he was a boy of sixteen, and she, at grave twenty, a model housekeeper, and very scornful and religiously suspicious of theatricals. But she was never weary of telling me, in later years, how beautiful my father looked in his Highland dress, with the high black feathers.

In the afternoons, when my father returned (always punctually) from his business, he dined, at half-past four, in the front parlor, my mother sitting beside him to hear the events of the day, and give counsel and encouragement with respect to the same;—chiefly the last, for my father was apt to be vexed if orders for sherry fell the least short of their due standard, even for a day or two. I was never present at this time, however, and only avouch what I relate by hearsay and probable conjecture; for between four and six it would have been a grave misdemeanor in me if I so much as approached the parlor door. After that, in summer time, we were all in the garden as long as the day lasted; tea under the white-heart cherry tree; or in winter and rough weather, at six o'clock in the drawing-room,—I having my cup of milk, and slice of bread-and-butter, in a little recess, with a table in front of it, wholly sacred to me; and in which I remained in the evenings as an Idol in a niche, while my mother knitted, and my father read to her,—and to me, so far as I chose to listen.

The series of the Waverley novels, then drawing towards its close, was still the chief source of delight in all households caring for literature; and I can no more recollect the time when I did not know them than when I did not know the Bible; but I have still a vivid remembrance of my father's intense expression of sorrow mixed with scorn, as he threw down *Count Robert of Paris*, after reading three or four pages; and knew that the life of Scott was ended: the scorn being a very complex and bitter feeling in him,—partly, indeed, of the book itself, but chiefly of the wretches who were tormenting and selling the wrecked intellect, and not a little, deep down, of the subtle dishonesty which had essentially caused the ruin. My father never could forgive Scott his concealment of the Ballantyne partnership.

Such being the salutary pleasures of Herne Hill, I have next with deeper gratitude to

chronicle what I owe to my mother for the resolutely consistent lessons which so exercised me in the Scriptures as to make every word of them familiar to my ear in habitual music,—yet in that familiarity revered, as transcending all thought, and ordaining all conduct.

This she effected, not by her own sayings or personal authority; but simply by compelling me to read the book thoroughly, for myself. As soon as I was able to read with fluency, she began a course of Bible work with me, which never ceased till I went to Oxford. She read alternate verses with me, watching, at first, every intonation of my voice, and correcting the false ones, till she made me understand the verse, if within my reach, rightly, and energetically. It might be beyond me altogether; that she did not care about; but she made sure that as soon as I got hold of it at all, I should get hold of it by the right end.

In this way she began with the first verse of Genesis, and went straight through, to the last verse of the Apocalypse; hard names, numbers, Levitical law, and all; and began again at Genesis the next day. If a name was hard, the better the exercise in pronunciation,—if the chapter was tiresome, the better lesson in patience,—if loathsome, the better lesson in faith that there was some use in its being so outspoken. After our chapters (from two to three a day, according to their length, the first thing after breakfast, and no interruption from servants allowed,—none from visitors, who either joined in the reading or had to stay upstairs,—and none from any visitings or excursions, except real traveling), I had to learn a few verses by heart, or repeat, to make sure I had not lost, something of what was already known; and, with the chapters thus gradually possessed from the first word to the last, I had to learn the whole body of the fine old Scottish paraphrases, which are good, melodious, and forceful verse; and to which, together with the Bible itself, I owe the first cultivation of my ear in sound.

It is strange that of all the pieces of the Bible which my mother thus taught me, that which cost me most to learn, and which was, to my child's mind, chiefly repulsive—the 119th Psalm—has now become of all the most precious to me, in its overflowing and

glorious passion of love for the Law of God, in opposition to the abuse of it by modern preachers of what they imagine to be His gospel.

But it is only by deliberate effort that I recall the long morning hours of toil, as regular as sunrise,—toil on both sides equal—by which, year after year, my mother forced me to learn these paraphrases, and chapters (the eighth of 1st Kings being one—try it, good reader, in a leisure hour!), allowing not so much as a syllable to be missed or misplaced; while every sentence was required to be said over and over again till she was satisfied with the accent of it. I recollect a struggle between us of about three weeks, concerning the accent of the “of” in the lines

Shall any following spring revive
The ashes of the urn?¹—

I insisting, partly in childish obstinacy, and partly in true instinct for rhythm (being wholly careless on the subject both of urns and their contents), on reciting it with an accented *of*. It was not, I say, till after three weeks’ labor, that my mother got the accent lightened on the “of” and laid on the ashes, to her mind. But had it taken three years she would have done it, having once undertaken to do it. And, assuredly, had she not done it,—well, there’s no knowing what would have happened; but I’m very thankful she *did*.

I have just opened my oldest (in use) Bible,—a small, closely, and very neatly printed volume it is, printed in Edinburgh by Sir D. Hunter Blair and J. Bruce, Printers to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, in 1816. Yellow, now, with age; and flexible, but not unclean, with much use; except that the lower corners of the pages at 8th of 1st Kings, and 32d Deuteronomy, are worn somewhat thin and dark, the learning of these two chapters having cost me much pains. My mother’s list of the chapters with which, thus learned, she established my soul in life, has just fallen out of it. I will take what indulgence the incurious reader can give me, for printing the list thus accidentally occurrent:—

Exodus,	chapters	15th and 20th.
2 Samuel,	“	1st, from 17th verse to end.
1 Kings,	“	8th.
Psalms,	“	23d, 32d, 90th, 91st, 103d, 112th, 119th, 139th.
Proverbs,	“	2d, 3d, 8th, 12th.
Isaiah,	“	58th.
Matthew,	“	5th, 6th, 7th.
Acts,	“	26th.
1 Corinthians,	“	13th, 15th.
James,	“	4th.
Revelation,	“	5th, 6th.

And, truly, though I have picked up the elements of a little further knowledge—in mathematics, meteorology, and the like, in after life,—and owe not a little to the teaching of many people, this maternal installation of my mind in that property of chapters I count very confidently the most precious, and, on the whole, the one *essential* part of all my education.

MODERN PAINTERS

DEFINITION OF GREATNESS IN ART²

IN THE 15th Lecture of Sir Joshua Reynolds,³ incidental notice is taken of the distinction between those excellences in the painter which belong to him *as such*, and those which belong to him in common with all men of intellect, the general and exalted powers of which art is the evidence and expression, not the subject. But the distinction is not there dwelt upon as it should be, for it is owing to the slight attention ordinarily paid to it, that criticism is open to every form of coxcombry, and liable to every phase of error. It is a distinction on which depend all sound judgment of the rank of the artist, and all just appreciation of the dignity of art.

Painting, or art generally, as such, with all its technicalities, difficulties, and particular ends, is nothing but a noble and expressive language, invaluable as the vehicle of thought, but by itself nothing. He who has learned what is commonly considered the

²Vol. I (published in 1843), part I, section 1, chapter 2.

³Reynolds delivered a series of lectures, or discourses, as they are usually called, during his presidency of the Royal Academy.

¹By John Logan, in one of the *Scottish Church Paraphrases*.

whole art of painting, that is, the art of representing any natural object faithfully, has as yet only learned the language by which his thoughts are to be expressed. He has done just as much towards being that which we ought to respect as a great painter, as a man who has learned how to express himself grammatically and melodiously has towards being a great poet. The language is, indeed, more difficult of acquirement in the one case than in the other, and possesses more power of delighting the sense, while it speaks to the intellect; but it is, nevertheless, nothing more than language, and all those excellences which are peculiar to the painter as such, are merely what rhythm, melody, precision, and force are in the words of the orator and the poet, necessary to their greatness, but not the test of their greatness. It is not by the mode of representing and saying, but by what is represented and said, that the respective greatness either of the painter or the writer is to be finally determined.

Speaking with strict propriety, therefore, we should call a man a great painter only as he excelled in precision and force in the language of lines, and a great versifier, as he excelled in precision and force in the language of words. A great poet would then be a term strictly, and in precisely the same sense, applicable to both, if warranted by the character of the images or thoughts which each in their respective languages conveyed.

Take, for instance, one of the most perfect poems or pictures (I use the words as synonymous) which modern times have seen:—the “Old Shepherd’s Chief-mourner.” Here the exquisite execution of the glossy and crisp hair of the dog, the bright sharp touching of the green bough beside it, the clear² painting of the wood of the coffin and the folds of the blanket, are language—language clear and expressive in the highest degree. But the close pressure of the dog’s breast against the wood, the convulsive clinging of the paws, which has dragged the blanket off the trestle, the total powerlessness of the head laid, close and motionless, upon

its folds, the fixed and tearful fall of the eye in its utter hopelessness, the rigidity of repose which marks that there has been no motion nor change in the trance of agony since the last blow was struck on the coffin-lid, the quietness and gloom of the chamber, the spectacles marking the place where the Bible was last closed, indicating how lonely has been the life, how unwatched the departure of him who is now laid solitary in his sleep;—these are all thoughts—thoughts by which the picture is separated at once from hundreds of equal merit, as far as mere painting goes, by which it ranks as a work of high art, and stamps its author, not as the neat imitator of the texture of a skin, or the fold of a drapery, but as the Man of Mind.

It is not, however, always easy, either in painting or literature, to determine where the influence of language stops, and where that of thought begins. Many thoughts are so dependent upon the language in which they are clothed, that they would lose half their beauty if otherwise expressed. But the highest thoughts are those which are least dependent on language, and the dignity of any composition, and praise to which it is entitled, are in exact proportion to its independency of language or expression. A composition is indeed usually most perfect, when to such intrinsic dignity is added all that expression can do to attract and adorn; but in every case of supreme excellence this all becomes as nothing. We are more gratified by the simplest lines or words which can suggest the idea in its own naked beauty, than by the robe and the gem which conceal while they decorate; we are better pleased to feel by their absence how little they could bestow, than by their presence how much they can destroy.

There is therefore a distinction to be made between what is ornamental in language and what is expressive. That part of it which is necessary to the embodying and conveying of the thought is worthy of respect and attention as necessary to excellence, though not the test of it. But that part of it which is decorative has little more to do with the intrinsic excellence of the picture than the frame or the varnishing of it. And this caution in distinguishing between the ornamental and the expressive is peculiarly necessary in painting; for in the language of words

¹By Sir Edwin Landseer, now in the Victoria and Albert South Kensington Museum.

²“Clear” is printed in all the editions, and so is retained here, but Ruskin originally wrote “clever” and probably never detected the misprint.

it is nearly impossible for that which is not expressive to be beautiful, except by mere rhythm or melody, any sacrifice to which is immediately stigmatized as error. But the beauty of mere language in painting is not only very attractive and entertaining to the spectator, but requires for its attainment no small exertion of mind and devotion of time by the artist. Hence, in art, men have frequently fancied that they were becoming rhetoricians and poets when they were only learning to speak melodiously, and the judge has over and over again advanced to the honor of authors those who were never more than ornamental writing-masters.

Most pictures of the Dutch school, for instance, excepting always those of Rubens, Vandyke, and Rembrandt, are ostentatious exhibitions of the artist's power of speech, the clear and vigorous elocution of useless and senseless words; while the early efforts of Cimabue¹ and Giotto² are the burning messages of prophecy, delivered by the stammering lips of infants. It is not by ranking the former as more than mechanics, or the latter as less than artists, that the taste of the multitude, always awake to the lowest pleasures which art can bestow, and blunt to the highest, is to be formed or elevated. It must be the part of the judicious critic carefully to distinguish what is language, and what is thought, and to rank and praise pictures chiefly for the latter, considering the former as a totally inferior excellence, and one which cannot be compared with nor weighed against thought in any way nor in any degree whatsoever. The picture which has the nobler and more numerous ideas, however awkwardly expressed, is a greater and a better picture than that which has the less noble and less numerous ideas, however beautifully expressed. No weight, nor mass, nor beauty of execution, can outweigh one grain or fragment of thought. Three pen-strokes of Raffaele are a greater and a better picture than the most finished work that ever Carlo Dolci³ polished into inanity. A finished work of a great artist is only better than its sketch, if the sources of pleasure belonging to color and realization—valuable

in themselves—are so employed as to increase the impressiveness of the thought. But if one atom of thought has vanished, all color, all finish, all execution, all ornament, are too dearly bought. Nothing but thought can pay for thought, and the instant that the increasing refinement or finish of the picture begins to be paid for by the loss of the faintest shadow of an idea, that instant all refinement or finish is an excrescence and a deformity.

Yet although in all our speculations on art, language is thus to be distinguished from, and held subordinate to, that which it conveys, we must still remember that there are certain ideas inherent in language itself, and that, strictly speaking, every pleasure connected with art has in it some reference to the intellect. The mere sensual pleasure of the eye, received from the most brilliant piece of coloring, is as nothing to that which it receives from a crystal prism, except as it depends on our perception of a certain meaning and intended arrangement of color, which has been the subject of intellect. Nay, the term idea, according to Locke's⁴ definition of it, will extend even to the sensual impressions themselves as far as they are "things which the mind occupies itself about in thinking"; that is, not as they are felt by the eye only, but as they are received by the mind through the eye. So that, if I say that the greatest picture is that which conveys to the mind of the spectator the greatest number of the greatest ideas, I have a definition which will include as subjects of comparison every pleasure which art is capable of conveying. If I were to say, on the contrary, that the best picture was that which most closely imitated nature, I should assume that art could only please by imitating nature; and I should cast out of the pale of criticism those parts of works of art which are not imitative, that is to say, intrinsic beauties of color and form, and those works of art wholly, which like the Arabesques of Raffaele in the Loggias,⁵ are not imitative at all. Now, I want a definition of art wide enough to include all its varieties of aim. I do not say, therefore, that the art is greatest which gives

¹Florentine painter (1240?-1302?).

²Florentine painter and architect (1276?-1337?).

³Tuscan painter (1616-1686).

⁴John Locke (1632-1704). The following quotation comes from Bk. II, chap. i, of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.

⁵Of the Vatican, Rome.

most pleasure, because perhaps there is some art whose end is to teach, and not to please. I do not say that the art is greatest which teaches us most, because perhaps there is some art whose end is to please, and not to teach. I do not say that the art is greatest which imitates best, because perhaps there is some art whose end is to create and not to imitate. But I say that the art is greatest which conveys to the mind of the spectator, by any means whatsoever, the greatest number of the greatest ideas; and I call an idea great in proportion as it is received by a higher faculty of the mind, and as it more fully occupies, and in occupying, exercises and exalts, the faculty by which it is received.

If this, then, be the definition of great art, that of a great artist naturally follows. He is the greatest artist who has embodied, in the sum of his works, the greatest number of the greatest ideas.

LA RICCIA¹

THERE is, in the first room of the National Gallery, a landscape attributed to Gaspar Poussin,² called sometimes Aricia, sometimes Le or La Riccia, according to the fancy of catalogue printers. Whether it can be supposed to resemble the ancient Aricia, now La Riccia, close to Albano, I will not take upon me to determine, seeing that most of the towns of these old masters are quite as like one place as another; but, at any rate, it is a town on a hill, wooded with two-and-thirty bushes, of very uniform size, and possessing about the same number of leaves each. These bushes are all painted in with one dull opaque brown, becoming very slightly greenish toward the lights, and discover in one place a bit of rock, which of course would in nature have been cool and gray beside the lustrous hues of foliage, and which, therefore, being moreover completely in shade, is consistently and scientifically painted of a very clear, pretty, and positive brick red, the only thing like color in the picture. The foreground is a piece of road which, in order to make allowance for its greater nearness, for its being completely in

light, and, it may be presumed, for the quantity of vegetation usually present on carriage-roads, is given in a very cool green gray; and the truth of the picture is completed by a number of dots in the sky on the right, with a stalk to them, of a sober and similar brown.³

Not long ago, I was slowly descending this very bit of carriage-road, the first turn after you leave Albano, not a little impeded by the worthy successors of the ancient prototypes of Veiento.⁴ It had been wild weather when I left Rome, and all across the Campagna the clouds were sweeping in sulphurous blue, with a clap of thunder or two, and breaking gleams of sun along the Claudian aqueduct, lighting up the infinity of its arches like the bridge of chaos. But as I climbed the long slope of the Alban Mount, the storm swept finally to the north, and the noble outline of the domes of Albano, and graceful darkness of its ilex grove rose against pure streaks of alternate blue and amber; the upper sky gradually flushing through the last fragments of rain-cloud in deep palpitating azure, half ether and half dew. The noonday sun came slanting down the rocky slopes of La Riccia, and its masses of entangled and tall foliage, whose autumnal tints were mixed with the wet verdure of a thousand evergreens, were penetrated with it as with rain. I cannot call it color, it was conflagration. Purple, and crimson, and scarlet, like the curtains of God's tabernacle, the rejoicing trees sank into the valley in showers of light, every separate leaf quivering with buoyant and burning life; each, as it turned to reflect or to transmit the sunbeam, first a torch and then an emerald. Far up into the recesses of the valley, the green vistas arched like the hollows of mighty waves of some crystalline sea, with the arbutus flowers dashed along their flanks for foam, and silver flakes of orange spray tossed into the air around them, breaking over the gray walls of rock into a thousand separate stars, fading and kindling alternately as the weak wind lifted and let them fall. Every glade of grass

¹It should be said that this picture was very dirty when Ruskin wrote the first volume of *Modern Painters*. In 1880 it was cleaned and varnished.

²Volume I, part II, section 2, from chapter 2, "Of Truth of Color."

³French landscape painter (1613-1675), brother-in-law and pupil of the more famous Nicolas Poussin.

⁴*I.e.*, by beggars (Ruskin refers to a passage in Juvenal—*Sat.*, IV, 116—where, however, it is one Catullus, and not Veiento, who is described as fit only to beg alms on the Arician road).

burned like the golden floor of heaven, opening in sudden gleams as the foliage broke and closed above it, as sheet-lightning opens in a cloud at sunset; the motionless masses of dark rock—dark though flushed with scarlet lichen, casting their quiet shadows across its restless radiance, the fountain underneath them filling its marble hollow with blue mist and fitful sound; and over all, the multitudinous bars of amber and rose, the sacred clouds that have no darkness, and only exist to illumine, were seen in fathomless intervals between the solemn and orbéd repose of the stone pines, passing to lose themselves in the last, white, blinding luster of the measureless line where the Campagna melted into the blaze of the sea.

OF MODERN LANDSCAPE¹

WE TURN our eyes, therefore, as boldly and as quickly as may be, from these serene fields and skies of mediæval art,² to the most characteristic examples of modern landscape. And, I believe, the first thing that will strike us, or that ought to strike us, is their *cloudiness*.

Out of perfect light and motionless air, we find ourselves on a sudden brought under somber skies, and into drifting wind; and, with fickle sunbeams flashing in our face, or utterly drenched with sweep of rain, we are reduced to track the changes of the shadows on the grass, or watch the rents of twilight through angry cloud. And we find that whereas all the pleasure of the mediæval was in *stability, definiteness, and luminousness*, we are expected to rejoice in darkness, and triumph in mutability; to lay the foundation of happiness in things which momentarily change or fade; and to expect the utmost satisfaction and instruction from what it is impossible to arrest, and difficult to comprehend.

We find, however, together with this general delight in breeze and darkness, much attention to the real form of clouds, and careful drawing of effects of mist; so that the appearance of objects, as seen through it,

becomes a subject of science with us; and the faithful representation of that appearance is made of primal importance, under the name of *aërial perspective*. The aspects of sunset and sunrise, with all their attendant phenomena of cloud and mist, are watchfully delineated; and in ordinary daylight landscape, the sky is considered of so much importance, that a principal mass of foliage, or a whole foreground, is unhesitatingly thrown into shade merely to bring out the form of a white cloud. So that, if a general and characteristic name were needed for modern landscape art, none better could be invented than "the service of clouds."

And this name would, unfortunately, be characteristic of our art in more ways than one. In the last chapter, I said that all the Greeks spoke kindly about the clouds, except Aristophanes; and he, I am sorry to say (since his report is so unfavorable), is the only Greek who had studied them attentively. He tells us, first, that they are "great goddesses to idle men"; then, that they are "mistresses of disputings, and logic, and monstrosities, and noisy chattering"; declares that whoso believes in their divinity must first disbelieve in Jupiter, and place supreme power in the hands of an unknown god "Whirlwind"; and, finally, he displays their influence over the mind of one of their disciples, in his sudden desire "to speak ingeniously concerning smoke."³

There is, I fear, an infinite truth in this Aristophanic judgment applied to our modern cloud-worship. Assuredly, much of the love of mystery in our romances, our poetry, our art, and, above all, in our metaphysics, must come under that definition so long ago given by the great Greek, "speaking ingeniously concerning smoke." And much of the instinct, which, partially developed in painting, may be now seen throughout every mode of exertion of mind,—the easily encouraged doubt, easily excited curiosity, habitual agitation, and delight in the changing and the marvelous, as opposed to the old quiet serenity of social custom and religious faith,—is again deeply defined in those few words, the "dethroning of Jupiter," "the coronation of the whirlwind."

Nor of whirlwind merely, but also of

¹Volume III (published in 1856), part IV, from chapter 16.

²The preceding chapter is entitled "Of Mediæval Landscape."

³See the *Clouds* of Aristophanes, ll. 316–318, 320, and 360.

darkness or ignorance respecting all stable facts. That darkening of the foreground to bring out the white cloud, is, in one aspect of it, a type of the subjection of all plain and positive fact, to what is uncertain and unintelligible. And, as we examine farther into the matter, we shall be struck by another great difference between the old and modern landscape, namely, that in the old no one ever thought of drawing anything but as well as *he could*. That might not be *well*, as we have seen in the case of rocks; but it was as well as *he could*, and always distinctly. Leaf, or stone, or animal, or man, it was equally drawn with care and clearness, and its essential characters shown. If it was an oak tree, the acorns were drawn; if a flint pebble, its veins were drawn; if an arm of the sea, its fish were drawn; if a group of figures, their faces and dresses were drawn—to the very last subtlety of expression and end of thread that could be got into the space, far off or near. But now our ingenuity is all “concerning smoke.” Nothing is truly drawn but that; all else is vague, slight, imperfect; got with as little pains as possible. You examine your closest foreground, and find no leaves; your largest oak, and find no acorns; your human figure, and find a spot of red paint instead of a face; and in all this, again and again, the Aristophanic words come true, and the clouds seem to be “great goddesses to idle men.”

The next thing that will strike us, after this love of clouds, is the love of liberty. Whereas the medieval was always shutting himself into castles, and behind fosses, and drawing brickwork neatly, and beds of flowers primly, our painters delight in getting to the open fields and moors; abhor all hedges and moats; never paint anything but free-growing trees, and rivers gliding “at their own sweet will”;¹ eschew formality down to the smallest detail; break and displace the brickwork which the medieval would have carefully cemented; leave unpruned the thickets he would have delicately trimmed; and, carrying the love of liberty even to license, and the love of wildness even to ruin, take pleasure at last in every aspect of age and desolation which emancipates the objects of nature from the government

of men;—on the castle wall displacing its tapestry with ivy, and spreading, through the garden, the bramble for the rose.

Connected with this love of liberty we find a singular manifestation of love of mountains, and see our painters traversing the wildest places of the globe in order to obtain subjects with craggy foregrounds and purple distances. Some few of them remain content with pollards and flat land; but these are always men of third-rate order; and the leading masters, while they do not reject the beauty of the low grounds, reserve their highest powers to paint Alpine peaks or Italian promontories. And it is eminently noticeable, also, that this pleasure in the mountains is never mingled with fear, or tempered by a spirit of meditation, as with the medieval; but is always free and fearless, brightly exhilarating, and wholly unreflective; so that the painter feels that his mountain foreground may be more consistently animated by a sportsman than a hermit; and our modern society in general goes to the mountains, not to fast, but to feast, and leaves their glaciers covered with chicken-bones and egg-shells.

Connected with this want of any sense of solemnity in mountain scenery, is a general profanity of temper in regarding all the rest of nature; that is to say, a total absence of faith in the presence of any deity therein. Whereas the medieval never painted a cloud, but with the purpose of placing an angel in it; and a Greek never entered a wood without expecting to meet a god in it; *we* should think the appearance of an angel in the cloud wholly unnatural, and should be seriously surprised by meeting a god anywhere. Our chief ideas about the wood are connected with poaching. We have no belief that the clouds contain more than so many inches of rain or hail, and from our ponds and ditches expect nothing more divine than ducks and watercresses.

Finally: connected with this profanity of temper is a strong tendency to deny the sacred element of color, and make our boast in blackness. For though occasionally glaring or violent, modern color is on the whole eminently somber, tending continually to gray or brown, and by many of our best painters consistently falsified, with a confessed pride in what they call chaste or

¹Wordsworth, sonnet *Composed upon Westminster Bridge*, 3 September, 1802, l. 12.

subdued tints; so that, whereas a medieval painter paints his sky bright blue and his foreground bright green, gilds the towers of his castles, and clothes his figures with purple and white, we paint our sky gray, our foreground black, and our foliage brown, and think that enough is sacrificed to the sun in admitting the dangerous brightness of a scarlet cloak or a blue jacket.

These, I believe, are the principal points which would strike us instantly, if we were to be brought suddenly into an exhibition of modern landscapes out of a room filled with medieval work. It is evident that there are both evil and good in this change; but how much evil, or how much good, we can only estimate by considering, as in the former divisions of our inquiry, what are the real roots of the habits of mind which have caused them.

And first, it is evident that the title "Dark Ages," given to the medieval centuries, is, respecting art, wholly inapplicable. They were, on the contrary, the bright ages; ours are the dark ones. I do not mean metaphysically, but literally. They were the ages of gold; ours are the ages of umber.

This is partly mere mistake in us; we build brown brick walls, and wear brown coats, because we have been blunderingly taught to do so, and go on doing so mechanically. There is, however, also some cause for the change in our own tempers. On the whole, these are much *sadder* ages than the early ones; not sadder in a noble and deep way, but in a dim wearied way,—the way of ennui, and jaded intellect, and uncomfortableness of soul and body. The Middle Ages had their wars and agonies, but also intense delights. Their gold was dashed with blood; but ours is sprinkled with dust. Their life was woven with white and purple: ours is one seamless stuff of brown. Not that we are without apparent festivity, but festivity more or less forced, mistaken, embittered, incomplete—not of the heart. How wonderfully, since Shakespeare's time, have we lost the power of laughing at bad jests! The very finish of our wit belies our gayety.

The profoundest reason of this darkness of heart is, I believe, our want of faith. There never yet was a generation of men (savage or civilized) who, taken as a body, so woefully fulfilled the words "having no hope, and without God in the world,"¹

as the present civilized European race. A Red Indian or Otaheitan² savage has more sense of a divine existence round him, or government over him, than the plurality of refined Londoners and Parisians: and those among us who may in some sense be said to believe, are divided almost without exception into two broad classes, Romanist and Puritan; who, but for the interference of the unbelieving portions of society, would, either of them, reduce the other sect as speedily as possible to ashes; the Romanist having always done so whenever he could, from the beginning of their separation, and the Puritan at this time holding himself in complacent expectation of the destruction of Rome by volcanic fire. Such division as this between persons nominally of one religion, that is to say, believing in the same God, and the same Revelation, cannot but become a stumbling-block of the gravest kind to all thoughtful and far-sighted men,—a stumbling-block which they can only surmount under the most favorable circumstances of early education. Hence, nearly all our powerful men in this age of the world are unbelievers; the best of them in doubt and misery; the worst in reckless defiance; the plurality, in plodding hesitation, doing, as well as they can, what practical work lies ready to their hands. Most of our scientific men are in this last class: our popular authors either set themselves definitely against all religious form, pleading for simple truth and benevolence (Thackeray, Dickens), or give themselves up to bitter and fruitless statement of facts (De Balzac), or surface-painting (Scott), or careless blasphemy, sad or smiling (Byron, Béranger). Our earnest poets and deepest thinkers are doubtful and indignant (Tennyson, Carlyle); one or two, anchored, indeed, but anxious or weeping (Wordsworth, Mrs. Browning); and of these two, the first is not so sure of his anchor, but that now and then it drags with him, even to make him cry out,—

Great God, I had rather be
A Pagan suckled in some creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn.³

¹Otaheite (Tahiti) is the largest of the Society Islands, in the South Pacific.

²Sonnet beginning "The world is too much with us; late and soon," ll. 9-12.

³Ephesians, ii, 12.

In politics, religion is now a name; in art, a hypocrisy or affectation. Over German religious pictures the inscription, "See how Pious I am," can be read at a glance by any clear-sighted person. Over French and English religious pictures the inscription, "See how Impious I am," is equally legible. All sincere and modest art is, among us, profane.¹

This faithlessness operates among us according to our tempers, producing either sadness or levity, and being the ultimate root alike of our discontents and of our wantonnesses. It is marvelous how full of contradiction it makes us: we are first dull, and seek for wild and lonely places because we have no heart for the garden; presently we recover our spirits, and build an assembly-room among the mountains, because we have no reverence for the desert. I do not know if there be game on Sinai, but I am always expecting to hear of some one's shooting over it.²

There is, however, another, and a more innocent root of our delight in wild scenery.

All the Renaissance principles of art tended, as I have before often explained, to the setting Beauty above Truth, and seeking for it always at the expense of truth. And the proper punishment of such pursuit—the punishment which all the laws of the universe rendered inevitable—was, that those who thus pursued beauty should wholly lose sight of beauty. All the thinkers of the age, as we saw previously, declared that it did not exist. The age seconded their efforts, and banished beauty, so far as human effort could succeed in doing so, from the face of the earth, and the form of man. To powder the hair, to patch the cheek, to hoop the body, to buckle the foot, were all part and parcel of the same system which reduced streets to brick walls, and pictures to brown stains. One desert of Ugliness was extended before the eyes of mankind; and their pursuit of the beautiful, so recklessly

continued, received unexpected consummation in high-heeled shoes and periwigs,—Gower Street, and Gaspar Poussin.

Reaction from this state was inevitable, if any true life was left in the races of mankind; and, accordingly, though still forced, by rule and fashion, to the producing and wearing all that is ugly, men steal out, half-ashamed of themselves for doing so, to the fields and mountains; and, finding among these the color, and liberty, and variety, and power, which are for ever grateful to them, delight in these to an extent never before known; rejoice in all the wildest shattering of the mountain side, as an opposition to Gower Street, gaze in a rapt manner at sunsets and sunrises, to see there the blue, and gold, and purple, which glow for them no longer on knight's armor or temple porch; and gather with care out of the fields, into their blotted herbaria, the flowers which the five orders of architecture have banished from their doors and casements.

The absence of care for personal beauty, which is another great characteristic of the age, adds to this feeling in a twofold way: first, by turning all reverent thoughts away from human nature; and making us think of men as ridiculous or ugly creatures, getting through the world as well as they can, and spoiling it in doing so; not ruling it in a kingly way and crowning all its loveliness. In the Middle Ages hardly anything but vice could be caricatured, because virtue was always visibly and personally noble: now virtue itself is apt to inhabit such poor human bodies, that no aspect of it is invulnerable to jest; and for all fairness we have to seek to the flowers; for all sublimity, to the hills.

The same want of care operates, in another way, by lowering the standard of health, increasing the susceptibility to nervous or sentimental impressions, and thus adding to the other powers of nature over us whatever charm may be felt in her fostering the melancholy fancies of brooding idleness.

It is not, however, only to existing inanimate nature that our want of beauty in person and dress has driven us. The imagination of it, as it was seen in our ancestors, haunts us continually; and while we yield to the present fashions, or act in

¹Pre-Raphaelitism, of course, excepted, which is a new phase of art, in no wise considered in this chapter. Blake was sincere, but full of wild creeds, and somewhat diseased in brain (Ruskin's note).

²Ruskin's expectation was soon fulfilled; see his description of a drawing by J. F. Lewis, *Academy Notes*, 1856.

accordance with the dullest modern principles of economy and utility, we look fondly back to the manners of the ages of chivalry, and delight in painting, to the fancy, the fashions we pretend to despise, and the splendors we think it wise to abandon. The furniture and personages of our romance are sought, when the writer desires to please most easily, in the centuries which we profess to have surpassed in everything; the art which takes us into the present times is considered as both daring and degraded; and while the weakest words please us, and are regarded as poetry, which recall the manners of our forefathers, or of strangers, it is only as familiar and vulgar that we accept the description of our own.

In this we are wholly different from all the races that preceded us. All other nations have regarded their ancestors with reverence as saints or heroes; but have nevertheless thought their own deeds and ways of life the fitting subjects for their arts of painting or of verse. We, on the contrary, regard our ancestors as foolish and wicked, but yet find our chief artistic pleasures in descriptions of their ways of life.

The Greeks and medievals honored, but did not imitate their forefathers; we imitate, but do not honor.

With this romantic love of beauty, forced to seek in history, and in external nature, the satisfaction it cannot find in ordinary life, we mingle a more rational passion, the due and just result of newly awakened powers of attention. Whatever may first lead us to the scrutiny of natural objects, that scrutiny never fails of its reward. Unquestionably they are intended to be regarded by us with both reverence and delight; and every hour we give to them renders their beauty more apparent, and their interest more engrossing. Natural science—which can hardly be considered to have existed before modern times—rendering our knowledge fruitful in accumulation, and exquisite in accuracy, has acted for good or evil, according to the temper of the mind which received it; and though it has hardened the faithlessness of the dull and proud, has shown new grounds for reverence to hearts which were thoughtful and humble. The neglect of the art of war, while it has somewhat weakened and deformed the

body,¹ has given us leisure and opportunity for studies to which, before, time and space were equally wanting; lives which once were early wasted on the battle-field are now passed usefully in the study; nations which exhausted themselves in annual warfare now dispute with each other the discovery of new planets;² and the serene philosopher dissects the plants, and analyzes the dust, of lands which were of old only traversed by the knight in hasty march, or by the borderer in heedless rapine.

The elements of progress and decline being thus strangely mingled in the modern mind, we might beforehand anticipate that one of the notable characters of our art would be its inconsistency; that efforts would be made in every direction, and arrested by every conceivable cause and manner of failure; that in all we did, it would become next to impossible to distinguish accurately the grounds for praise or for regret; that all previous canons of practice and methods of thought would be gradually overthrown, and criticism continually defied by successes which no one had expected, and sentiments which no one could define.

Accordingly, while, in our inquiries into Greek and medieval art, I was able to describe, in general terms, what all men did or felt, I find now many characters in many men; some, it seems to me, founded on the inferior and evanescent principles of modernism, on its recklessness, impatience, or faithlessness; others founded on its science, its new affection for nature, its love of openness and liberty. And among all these characters, good or evil, I see that some, remaining to us from old or transitional periods, do not properly belong to us, and will soon fade away, and others, though not yet distinctly developed, are yet properly our own, and likely to grow forward into greater strength.

¹Of course this is meant only of the modern citizen or country gentleman, as compared with a citizen of Sparta or old Florence. I leave it to others to say whether the "neglect of the art of war" may or may not, in a yet more fatal sense, be predicated of the English nation. War *without* art, we seem, with God's help, able still to wage nobly (Ruskin's note). The "war *without* art" was the Crimean War.

²The allusion is to France and England. In each country several minor planets were discovered independently during the years 1854-1856.

For instance: our reprobation of bright color is, I think, for the most part, mere affectation, and must soon be done away with. Vulgarity, dullness, or impiety, will indeed always express themselves through art in brown and gray, as in Rembrandt, Caravaggio,¹ and Salvator;² but we are not wholly vulgar, dull, or impious; nor, as moderns, are we necessarily obliged to continue so in any wise. Our greatest men, whether sad or gay, still delight, like the great men of all ages, in brilliant hues. The coloring of Scott and Byron is full and pure; that of Keats and Tennyson rich even to excess. Our practical failures in coloring are merely the necessary consequences of our prolonged want of practice during the periods of Renaissance affectation and ignorance; and the only durable difference between old and modern coloring, is the acceptance of certain hues, by the modern, which please him by expressing that melancholy peculiar to his more reflective or sentimental character, and the greater variety of them necessary to express his greater science.

Again: if we ever become wise enough to dress consistently and gracefully, to make health a principal object in education, and to render our streets beautiful with art, the external charm of past history will in great measure disappear. There is no essential reason, because we live after the fatal seventeenth century, that we should never again be able to confess interest in sculpture, or see brightness in embroidery; nor, because now we choose to make the night deadly with our pleasures, and the day with our labors, prolonging the dance till dawn, and the toil to twilight, that we should never again learn how rightly to employ the sacred trusts of strength, beauty, and time. Whatever external charm attaches itself to the past, would then be seen in proper subordination to the brightness of present life; and the elements of romance would exist, in the earlier ages, only in the attraction which must generally belong to whatever is unfamiliar; in the reverence which a noble nation always pays to its ancestors; and in the enchanted light which races, like individ-

uals, must perceive in looking back to the days of their childhood.

Again: the peculiar levity with which natural scenery is regarded by a large number of modern minds cannot be considered as entirely characteristic of the age, inasmuch as it never can belong to its greatest intellects. Men of any high mental power must be serious, whether in ancient or modern days; a certain degree of reverence for fair scenery is found in all our great writers without exception,—even the one who has made us laugh oftenest, taking us to the valley of Chamouni, and to the sea beach, there to give peace after suffering, and change revenge into pity.³ It is only the dull, the uneducated, or the worldly, whom it is painful to meet on the hillsides; and levity, as a ruling character, cannot be ascribed to the whole nation, but only to its holiday-making apprentices, and its House of Commons.

We need not, therefore, expect to find any single poet or painter representing the entire group of powers, weaknesses, and inconsistent instincts which govern or confuse our modern life. But we may expect that in the man who seems to be given by Providence as the type of the age (as Homer and Dante were given, as the types of classical and medieval mind), we shall find whatever is fruitful and substantial to be completely present, together with those of our weaknesses, which are indeed nationally characteristic, and compatible with general greatness of mind, just as the weak love of fences, and dislike of mountains, were found compatible with Dante's greatness in other respects.

Farther: as the admiration of mankind is found, in our times, to have in great part passed from men to mountains, and from human emotion to natural phenomena, we may anticipate that the great strength of art will also be warped in this direction; with this notable result for us, that whereas the greatest painters or painter of classical and medieval periods, being wholly devoted to the representation of humanity, furnished us with but little to examine in landscape, the greatest painters or painter of modern times will in all probability be devoted to

¹Italian painter (1569–1609).

²Salvator Rosa (1615?–1673), Neapolitan painter, musician, and satirical poet.

³See *David Copperfield*, chaps. lv and lviii (Ruskin's note).

landscape principally; and farther, because in representing human emotion words surpass painting, but in representing natural scenery painting surpasses words, we may anticipate also that the painter and poet (for convenience' sake I here use the words in opposition) will somewhat change their relations of rank in illustrating the mind of the age; that the painter will become of more importance, the poet of less; and that the relations between the men who are the types and first-fruits of the age in word and work,—namely, Scott and Turner,—will be, in many curious respects, different from those between Homer and Phidias, or Dante and Giotto.

THE STONES OF VENICE

ST. MARK'S¹

"AND SO Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus." If as the shores of Asia lessened upon his sight, the spirit of prophecy had entered into the heart of the weak disciple who had turned back when his hand was on the plough, and who had been judged, by the chiefest of Christ's captains, unworthy thenceforward to go forth with him to the work,² how wonderful would he have thought it, that by the lion symbol in future ages he was to be represented among men! how woeful, that the war-cry of his name should so often reanimate the rage of the soldier, on those very plains where he himself had failed in the courage of the Christian, and so often dye with fruitless blood that very Cypriot Sea, over whose waves, in repentance and shame, he was following the Son of Consolation!

That the Venetians possessed themselves of his body in the ninth century, there appears no sufficient reason to doubt, nor that it was principally in consequence of their having done so, that they chose him for their patron saint. There exists, however, a tradition that before he went into Egypt he had founded the church at Aquileia, and was thus in some sort the first bishop of the Venetian isles and people. I believe that this tradition stands on nearly as good

grounds as that of St. Peter having been the first bishop of Rome; but, as usual, it is enriched by various later additions and embellishments, much resembling the stories told respecting the church of Murano. Thus we find it recorded by the Santo Padre who compiled the *Vite de' Santi spettanti alle Chiese di Venezia*,³ that "St. Mark having seen the people of Aquileia well grounded in religion, and being called to Rome by St. Peter, before setting off took with him the holy bishop Hermagoras, and went in a small boat to the marshes of Venice. There were at that period some houses built upon a certain high bank called Rialto, and the boat being driven by the wind was anchored in a marshy place, when St. Mark, snatched into ecstasy, heard the voice of an angel saying to him: 'Peace be to thee, Mark; here shall thy body rest.'" The angel goes on to foretell the building of *una stupenda, ne più veduta Città*;⁴ but the fable is hardly ingenious enough to deserve farther relation.

But whether St. Mark was first bishop of Aquileia or not, St. Theodore was the first patron of the city; nor can he yet be considered as having entirely abdicated his early right, as his statue, standing on a crocodile, still companions the winged lion on the opposing pillar of the piazzetta. A church erected to this Saint is said to have occupied, before the ninth century, the site of St. Mark's; and the traveler, dazzled by the brilliancy of the great square, ought not to leave it without endeavoring to imagine its aspect in that early time, when it was a green field, cloister-like and quiet, divided by a small canal, with a line of trees on each side; and extending between the two churches of St. Theodore and St. Gemanium, as the little piazza of Torcello lies between its "palazzo" and cathedral.

But in the year 813, when the seat of government was finally removed to the Rialto, a Ducal Palace, built on the spot where the present one stands, with a Ducal Chapel beside it, gave a very different character to the Square of St. Mark; and fifteen years later, the acquisition of the

¹Volume II (published in 1853) entitled "The [Sea-Stories]," from chapter 4.

²Acts, xiii, 13; xv, 38, 39 (Ruskin's note).

³By the Holy Father who compiled the *Lives of the Patron Saints of the Venetian Churches* (Ruskin gives the reference: Venice, 1761, I, 126).

⁴A wonderful city, never before seen.

body of the Saint, and its deposition in the Ducal Chapel, perhaps not yet completed, occasioned the investiture of that Chapel with all possible splendor. St. Theodore was deposed from his patronship, and his church destroyed, to make room for the aggrandizement of the one attached to the Ducal Palace, and thenceforward known as "St. Mark's."

This first church was however destroyed by fire, when the Ducal Palace was burned in the revolt against Candiano, in 976. It was partly rebuilt by his successor, Pietro Orseolo, on a larger scale; and, with the assistance of Byzantine architects, the fabric was carried on under successive Doges for nearly a hundred years; the main building being completed in 1071, but its incrustation with marble not till considerably later. It was consecrated on the 8th of October, 1085, according to Sansovino and the author of the *Chiesa Ducale di S. Marco*,¹ in 1094, according to Lazari, but certainly between 1084 and 1096, those years being the limits of the reign of Vital Falier; I incline to the supposition that it was soon after his accession to the throne in 1085, though Sansovino writes, by mistake, Ordelafo instead of Vital Falier. But, at all events, before the close of the eleventh century the great consecration of the church took place. It was again injured by fire in 1106, but repaired; and from that time to the fall of Venice there was probably no Doge who did not in some slight degree embellish or alter the fabric, so that few parts of it can be pronounced boldly to be of any given date. Two periods of interference are, however, notable above the rest: the first, that in which the Gothic school had superseded the Byzantine towards the close of the fourteenth century, when the pinnacles, upper archivolts, and window traceries were added to the exterior, and the great screen, with various chapels and tabernacle-work, to the interior; the second, when the Renaissance school superseded the Gothic, and the pupils of Titian and Tintoret substituted, over one-half of the church, their own compositions for the Greek mosaics with which it was originally decorated; happily, though with no good-will,

having left enough to enable us to imagine and lament what they destroyed. Of this irreparable loss we shall have more to say hereafter; meantime, I wish only to fix in the reader's mind the succession of periods of alterations as firmly and simply as possible.

We have seen that the main body of the church may be broadly stated to be of the eleventh century, the Gothic additions of the fourteenth, and the restored mosaics of the seventeenth. There is no difficulty in distinguishing at a glance the Gothic portions from the Byzantine; but there is considerable difficulty in ascertaining how long, during the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, additions were made to the Byzantine church, which cannot be easily distinguished from the work of the eleventh century, being purposely executed in the same manner. Two of the most important pieces of evidence on this point are, a mosaic in the south transept, and another over the northern door of the façade; the first representing the interior, the second the exterior, of the ancient church.

It has just been stated that the existing building was consecrated by the Doge Vital Falier. A peculiar solemnity was given to that act of consecration, in the minds of the Venetian people, by what appears to have been one of the best arranged and most successful impostures ever attempted by the clergy of the Romish Church. The body of St. Mark had, without doubt, perished in the conflagration of 976; but the revenues of the church depended too much upon the devotion excited by these relics to permit the confession of their loss. The following is the account given by Corner, and believed to this day by the Venetians, of the pretended miracle by which it was concealed.

"After the repairs undertaken by the Doge Orseolo, the place in which the body of the holy Evangelist rested had been altogether forgotten; so that the Doge Vital Falier was entirely ignorant of the place of the venerable deposit. This was no light affliction, not only to the pious Doge; but to all the citizens and people; so that at last, moved by confidence in the Divine mercy, they determined to implore, with prayer and fasting, the manifestation of so great a treasure, which did not now depend upon

¹Ducal church of St. Mark.

any human effort. A general fast being therefore proclaimed, and a solemn procession appointed for the 25th day of June, while the people assembled in the church interceded with God in fervent prayers for the desired boon, they beheld, with as much amazement as joy, a slight shaking in the marbles of a pillar (near the place where the altar of the Cross is now), which, presently falling to the earth, exposed to the view of the rejoicing people the chest of bronze in which the body of the Evangelist was laid."

Of the main facts of this tale there is no doubt. They were embellished afterward, as usual, by many fanciful traditions; as, for instance, that, when the sarcophagus was discovered, St. Mark extended his hand out of it, with a gold ring on one of the fingers which he permitted a noble of the Dolfin family to remove; and a quaint and delightful story was further invented of this ring, which I shall not repeat here, as it is now as well known as any tale of the Arabian Nights.¹ But the fast and the discovery of the coffin, by whatever means effected, are facts; and they are recorded in one of the best-preserved mosaics of the south transept, executed very certainly not long after the event had taken place, closely resembling in its treatment that of the Bayeux tapestry,² and showing, in a conventional manner, the interior of the church, as it then was, filled by the people, first in prayer, then in thanksgiving, the pillar standing open before them, and the Doge, in the midst of them, distinguished by his crimson bonnet embroidered with gold, but more unmistakably by the inscription "Dux" over his head, as uniformly is the case in the Bayeux tapestry, and most other pictorial works of the period. The church is, of course, rudely represented, and the two upper stories of it reduced to a small scale in order to form a background to the figures; one of those bold pieces of picture history which we in our pride of perspective, and a thousand things

besides, never dare attempt.³ We should have put in a column or two, of the real or perspective size, and subdued it into a vague background: the old workman crushed the church together that he might get it all in, up to the cupolas; and has, therefore, left us some useful notes of its ancient form, though any one who is familiar with the method of drawing employed at the period will not push the evidence too far. The two pulpits are there, however, as they are at this day, and the fringe of mosaic flowerwork which then encompassed the whole church, but which modern restorers have destroyed, all but one fragment still left in the south aisle. There is no attempt to represent the other mosaics on the roof, the scale being too small to admit of their being represented with any success; but some at least of those mosaics had been executed at that period, and their absence in the representation of the entire church is especially to be observed, in order to show that we must not trust to any negative evidence in such works. M. Lazari has rashly concluded that the central archivolt of St. Mark's *must* be posterior to the year 1205, because it does not appear in the representation of the exterior of the church over the northern door;⁴ but he justly observes that this mosaic (which is the other piece of evidence we possess respecting the ancient form of the building) cannot itself be earlier than 1205, since it represents the bronze horses which were brought from Constantinople in that year. And this one fact renders it very difficult to speak with confidence respecting the date of any part of the exterior of St. Mark's; for we have above seen that it was consecrated in the eleventh century, and yet here is one of its most important exterior decorations assuredly retouched, if not entirely added, in the thirteenth, although its style would have led us to suppose it had been an original part of the fabric. However, for all our purposes, it will be enough for the reader to remember that the earliest parts of the building belong to the eleventh, twelfth, and first part of

¹The story tells of the miraculous intervention of St. Mark, with St. George and St. Nicholas, to save Venice from destruction by a great storm in 1340. It is translated in Mrs. Jameson's *Sacred and Legendary Art*.

²A representation of episodes in the conquest of England by William of Normandy, dating probably from early in the twelfth century. It is in the Public Library of Bayeux.

³I leave this exceedingly ill-written sentence, trusting the reader will think I write better now (Ruskin's note, added in 1879).

⁴In 1879 Ruskin added the note: "He is right, however."

the thirteenth century; the Gothic portions to the fourteenth; some of the altars and embellishments to the fifteenth and sixteenth; and the modern portion of the mosaics to the seventeenth.

This, however, I only wish him to recollect in order that I may speak generally of the Byzantine architecture of St. Mark's, without leading him to suppose the whole church to have been built and decorated by Greek artists. Its later portions, with the single exception of the seventeenth century mosaics, have been so dexterously accommodated to the original fabric that the general effect is still that of a Byzantine building; and I shall not, except when it is absolutely necessary, direct attention to the discordant points, or weary the reader with anatomical criticism. Whatever in St. Mark's arrests the eye, or affects the feelings, is either Byzantine, or has been modified by Byzantine influence; and our inquiry into its architectural merits need not therefore be disturbed by the anxieties of antiquarianism, or arrested by the obscurities of chronology.

And now I wish that the reader, before I bring him into St. Mark's Place, would imagine himself for a little time in a quiet English cathedral town, and walk with me to the west front of its cathedral.¹ Let us go together up the more retired street, at the end of which we can see the pinnacles of one of the towers, and then through the low gray gateway, with its battlemented top and small latticed window in the center, into the inner private-looking road or close, where nothing goes in but the carts of the tradesmen who supply the bishop and the chapter, and where there are little shaven grass-plots, fenced in by neat rails, before old-fashioned groups of somewhat diminutive and excessively trim houses, with little oriel and bay windows jutting out here and there, and deep wooden cornices and eaves painted cream color and white, and small porches to their doors in the shape of cockle-shells, or little, crooked, thick, indescribable wooden gables warped a little on one side; and so forward till we come to larger houses, also old-fashioned, but of red brick, and with garden behind them, and fruit walls, which

show here and there, among the nectarines, the vestiges of an old cloister arch or shaft, and looking in front on the cathedral square itself, laid out in rigid divisions of smooth grass and gravel walk, yet not uncheerful, especially on the sunny side, where the canon's children are walking with their nursery maids. And so, taking care not to tread on the grass, we will go along the straight walk to the west front, and there stand for a time, looking up at its deep-pointed porches and the dark places between their pillars where there were statues once, and where the fragments, here and there, of a stately figure are still left, which has in it the likeness of a king, perhaps indeed a king on earth, perhaps a saintly king long ago in heaven; and so higher and higher up to the great moldering wall of rugged sculpture and confused arcades, shattered, and gray, and grisly with heads of dragons and mocking fiends, worn by the rain and swirling winds into yet unseemlier shape, and colored on their stony scales by the deep russet-orange lichen,² melancholy gold; and so, higher still, to the bleak towers, so far above that the eye loses itself among the bosses of their traceries, though they are rude and strong, and only sees like a drift of eddying black points, now closing, now scattering, and now settling suddenly into invisible places among the bosses and flowers, the crowd of restless birds that fill the whole square with that strange clangor of theirs, so harsh and yet so soothing, like the cries of birds on a solitary coast between the cliffs and sea.

Think for a little while of that scene, and the meaning of all its small formalisms, mixed with its serene sublimity. Estimate its secluded, continuous, drowsy felicities, and its evidence of the sense and steady performance of such kind of duties as can be regulated by the cathedral clock; and weigh the influence of those dark towers on all who have passed through the lonely square at their feet for centuries, and on all

¹Some have identified this English cathedral with Canterbury, others with Salisbury. Ruskin, however, mean this description to be generic.

²Alas! all this was described from things now never to be seen more. Read, for "the great moldering wall," and the context of four lines, "the beautiful new parapet by Mr. Scott, with a gross of kings sent down from Kensington" (Ruskin's note, added in 1879). Sir Gilbert Scott restored a number of cathedrals. The restoration of Salisbury was begun in 1862 and 66 new statues were placed on its west front.

who have seen them rising far away over the wooded plain, or catching on their square masses the last rays of the sunset, when the city at their feet was indicated only by the mist at the bend of the river. And then let us quickly recollect that we are in Venice, and land at the extremity of the Calle Lunga San Moisè, which may be considered as there answering to the secluded street that led us to our English cathedral gateway.¹

We find ourselves in a paved alley, some seven feet wide where it is widest, full of people, and resonant with cries of itinerant salesmen,—a shriek in their beginning, and dying away into a kind of brazen ringing, all the worse for its confinement between the high houses of the passage along which we have to make our way. Over head, an inextricable confusion of rugged shutters, and iron balconies and chimney flues, pushed out on brackets to save room, and arched windows with projecting sills of Istrian stone, and gleams of green leaves here and there where a fig-tree branch escapes over a lower wall from some inner cortile,² leading the eye up to the narrow stream of blue sky high over all. On each side, a row of shops, as densely set as may be, occupying, in fact, intervals between the square stone shafts, about eight feet high, which carry the first floors: intervals of which one is narrow and serves as a door; the other is, in the more respectable shops, wainscoted to the height of the counter and glazed above, but in those of the poorer tradesmen left open to the ground, and the wares laid on benches and tables in the open air, the light in all cases entering at the front only, and fading away in a few feet from the threshold into a gloom which the eye from without cannot penetrate, but which is generally broken by a ray or two from a feeble lamp at the back of the shop, suspended before a print of the Virgin. The less pious shopkeeper sometimes leaves his lamp unlighted, and is contented with a penny print; the more religious one has his print colored and set in a little shrine with a gilded or figured fringe, with perhaps a faded flower or two on each side, and his

lamp burning brilliantly. Here, at the fruiterer's, where the dark-green water-melons are heaped upon the counter like cannon balls, the Madonna has a tabernacle of fresh laurel leaves; but the pewterer next door has let his lamp out, and there is nothing to be seen in his shop but the dull gleam of the studded patterns on the copper pans, hanging from his roof in the darkness. Next comes a *Vendita Frittole e Liquori*,³ where the Virgin, enthroned in a very humble manner beside a tallow candle on a back shelf, presides over certain ambrosial morsels of a nature too ambiguous to be defined or enumerated. But a few steps farther on, at the regular wine-shop of the calle, where we are offered *Vino Nostrani a Soldi 28.32*, the Madonna is in great glory, enthroned above ten or a dozen large red casks of three-year-old vintage, and flanked by goodly ranks of bottles of Maraschino, and two crimson lamps; and for the evening, when the gondoliers will come to drink out, under her auspices, the money they have gained during the day, she will have a whole chandelier.

A yard or two farther, we pass the hostelry of the Black Eagle, and glancing as we pass through the square door of marble, deeply molded, in the outer wall, we see the shadows of its pergola vines resting on an ancient well, with a pointed shield carved on its side; and so presently emerge on the bridge and Campo San Moisè, whence to the entrance into St. Mark's Place, called the Bocca di Piazza (mouth of the square), the Venetian character is nearly destroyed, first by the frightful façade of San Moisè, which we will pause at another time to examine,⁴ and then by the modernizing of the shops as they near the piazza, and the mingling with the lower Venetian populace of lounging groups of English and Austrians. We will push fast through them into the shadow of the pillars at the end of the Bocca di Piazza, and then we forget them all; for between those pillars there opens a great light, and, in the midst of it, as we advance slowly, the vast tower of St. Mark seems to lift itself visibly forth from the level field of checkered stones; and, on

¹The street has been widened and renamed since this was written.

²Courtyard.

³Fritter and Liquor Shop.

⁴See vol. III, chap. 3.

each side, the countless arches prolong themselves into ranged symmetry, as if the rugged and irregular houses that pressed together above us in the dark alley had been struck back into sudden obedience and lovely order, and all their rude casements and broken walls had been transformed into arches charged with goodly sculpture, and fluted shafts of delicate stone.

And well may they fall back, for beyond those troops of ordered arches there rises a vision out of the earth, and all the great square seems to have opened from it in a kind of awe, that we may see it far away;—a multitude of pillars and white domes, clustered into a long low pyramid of colored light; a treasure-heap, it seems, partly of gold, and partly of opal and mother-of-pearl, hollowed beneath into five great vaulted porches, ceiled with fair mosaic, and beset with sculpture of alabaster, clear as amber and delicate as ivory,—sculpture fantastic and involved, of palm leaves and lilies, and grapes and pomegranates, and birds clinging and fluttering among the branches, all twined together into an endless network of buds and plumes; and, in the midst of it, the solemn forms of angels, sceptered, and robed to the feet, and leaning to each other across the gates, their figures indistinct among the gleaming of the golden ground through the leaves beside them, interrupted and dim, like the morning light as it faded back among the branches of Eden, when first its gates were angel-guarded long ago. And round the walls of the porches there are set pillars of variegated stones, jasper and porphyry, and deep-green serpentine spotted with flakes of snow, and marbles, that half refuse and half yield to the sunshine, Cleopatra-like, “their bluest veins to kiss”¹—the shadow, as it steals back from them, revealing line after line of azure undulation, as a receding tide leaves the waved sand; their capitals rich with interwoven tracery, rooted knots of herbage, and drifting leaves of acanthus and vine, and mystical signs all beginning and ending in the Cross; and above them, in the broad archivolts, a continuous chain of language and of life—angels, and the signs of heaven, and the labors of men, each in its appointed season

upon the earth; and above these, another range of glittering pinnacles, mixed with white arches edged with scarlet flowers,—a confusion of delight, amidst which the breasts of the Greek horses are seen blazing in their breadth of golden strength, and the St. Mark’s lion, lifted on a blue field covered with stars, until at last, as if in ecstasy, the crests of the arches break into a marble foam, and toss themselves far into the blue sky in flashes and wreaths of sculptured spray, as if the breakers on the Lido shore had been frost-bound before they fell, and the sea-nymphs had inlaid them with coral and amethyst.

Between that grim cathedral of England and this, what an interval! There is a type of it in the very birds that haunt them; for, instead of the restless crowd, hoarse-voiced and sable-winged, drifting on the bleak upper air, the St. Mark’s porches are full of doves, that nestle among the marble foliage, and mingle the soft iridescence of their living plumes, changing at every motion, with the tints, hardly less lovely, that have stood unchanged for seven hundred years.

And what effect has this splendor on those who pass beneath it? You may walk from sunrise to sunset, to and fro, before the gateway of St. Mark’s, and you will not see an eye lifted to it, nor a countenance brightened by it. Priest and layman, soldier and civilian, rich and poor, pass by it alike regardlessly. Up to the very recesses of the porches, the meanest tradesmen of the city push their counters; nay, the foundations of its pillars are themselves the seats—not “of them that sell doves”² for sacrifice, but of the vendors of toys and caricatures. Round the whole square in front of the church there is almost a continuous line of cafés, where the idle Venetians of the middle classes lounge, and read empty journals; in its center the Austrian bands play during the time of vespers, their martial music jarring with the organ notes,—the march drowning the miserere, and the sullen crowd thickening round them,—a crowd, which, if it had its will, would stiletto every soldier that pipes to it.³ And in the

²St. Matthew, xxi, 12; St. John, ii, 16.

³This was written during the Austrian occupation of Venice.

¹*Antony and Cleopatra*, II, v, 29.

recesses of the porches, all day long, knots of men of the lowest classes, unemployed and listless, lie basking in the sun like lizards; and unregarded children,—every heavy glance of their young eyes full of desperation and stony depravity, and their throats hoarse with cursing,—gamble, and fight, and snarl, and sleep, hour after hour, clashing their bruised centesimi¹ upon the marble ledges of the church porch. And the images of Christ and His angels look down upon it continually.

That we may not enter the church out of the midst of the horror of this, let us turn aside under the portico which looks across the sea, and passing round within the two massive pillars brought from St. Jean d'Acre, we shall find the gate of the Baptistery; let us enter there. The heavy door closes behind us instantly, and the light and the turbulence of the Piazzetta are together shut out by it.

We are in a low vaulted room; vaulted, not with arches but with small cupolas starred with gold, and checkered with gloomy figures: in the center is a bronze font charged with rich bas-reliefs, a small figure of the Baptist standing above it in a single ray of light that glances across the narrow room, dying as it falls from a window high in the wall, and the first thing that it strikes, and the only thing that it strikes brightly, is a tomb. We hardly know if it be a tomb indeed; for it is like a narrow couch set beside the window, low-roofed and curtained, so that it might seem, but that it is some height above the pavement, to have been drawn towards the window, that the sleeper might be wakened early;—only there are two angels, who have drawn the curtain back, and are looking down upon him. Let us look also, and thank that gentle light that rests upon his forehead for ever, and dies away upon his breast.

The face is of a man in middle life, but there are two deep furrows right across the forehead, dividing it like the foundations of a tower: the height of it above is bound by the fillet of the ducal cap. The rest of the features are singularly small and delicate, the lips sharp, perhaps the sharpness of death being added to that of the natural lines; but there is a sweet smile upon them, and a

deep serenity upon the whole countenance. The roof of the canopy above has been blue, filled with stars; beneath, in the center of the tomb on which the figure rests, is a seated figure of the Virgin, and the border of it all around is of flowers and soft leaves, growing rich and deep, as if in a field in summer.

It is the Doge Andrea Dandolo, a man early great among the great of Venice; and early lost. She chose him for her king in his 36th year; he died ten years later, leaving behind him that history to which we owe half of what we know of her former fortunes.²

Look around at the room in which he lies. The floor of it is of rich mosaic, encompassed by a low seat of red marble, and its walls are of alabaster, but worn and shattered, and darkly stained with age, almost a ruin,—in places the slabs of marble have fallen away altogether, and the rugged brickwork is seen through the rents, but all beautiful; the ravaging fissures fretting their way among the islands and channeled zones of the alabaster, and the time-stains on its translucent masses darkened into fields of rich golden brown, like the color of seaweed when the sun strikes on it through deep sea. The light fades away into the recess of the chamber towards the altar, and the eye can hardly trace the lines of the bas-relief behind it of the baptism of Christ: but on the vaulting of the roof the figures are distinct, and there are seen upon it two great circles, one surrounded by the "Principalities and powers in heavenly places,"³ of which Milton has expressed the ancient division in the single massy line,

Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues,
Powers,⁴

and around the other, the Apostles; Christ the center of both: and upon the walls, again and again repeated, the gaunt figure of the Baptist, in every circumstance of his life and death; and the streams of the Jordan running down between their cloven rocks; the axe laid to the root of a fruitless tree that springs up on their shore. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall

²The *Venetian Chronicle* of Andrea Dandolo. He reigned from 1343 to 1354.

³See Ephesians, iii, 10.

⁴*Paradise Lost*, V, 601.

¹Small coins, normally worth about one-fifth of a cent.

be hewn down, and cast into the fire."¹ Yes, verily: to be baptized with fire, or to be cast therein; it is the choice set before all men. The march-notes still murmur through the grated window, and mingle with the sounding in our ears of the sentence of judgment, which the old Greek has written on the Baptistry wall. Venice has made her choice.

He who lies under that stony canopy would have taught her another choice, in his day, if she would have listened to him; but he and his counsels have long been forgotten by her, and the dust lies upon his lips.

Through the heavy door whose bronze network closes the place of his rest, let us enter the church itself. It is lost in still deeper twilight, to which the eye must be accustomed for some moments before the form of the building can be traced; and then there opens before us a vast cave, hewn out into the form of a Cross, and divided into shadowy aisles by many pillars. Round the domes of its roof the light enters only through narrow apertures like large stars; and here and there a ray or two from some far-away casement wanders into the darkness, and casts a narrow phosphoric stream upon the waves of marble that heave and fall in a thousand colors along the floor. What else there is of light is from torches, or silver lamps, burning ceaselessly in the recesses of the chapels; the roof sheeted with gold, and the polished walls covered with alabaster, give back at every curve and angle some feeble gleaming to the flames; and the glories round the heads of the sculptured saints flash out upon us as we pass them, and sink again into the gloom. Under foot and over head, a continual succession of crowded imagery, one picture passing into another, as in a dream; forms beautiful and terrible mixed together; dragons and serpents, and ravening beasts of prey, and graceful birds that in the midst of them drink from running fountains and feed from vases of crystal; the passions and the pleasures of human life symbolized together, and the mystery of its redemption; for the mazes of interwoven lines and changeable pictures lead always at last to the Cross, lifted and carved in every

place and upon every stone; sometimes with the serpent of eternity wrapped round it, sometimes with doves beneath its arms, and sweet herbage growing forth from its feet; conspicuous most of all on the great roof that crosses the church before the altar, raised in bright blazonry against the shadow of the apse. And although in the recesses of the aisles and chapels, when the mist of the incense hangs heavily, we may see continually a figure traced in faint lines upon their marble, a woman standing with her eyes raised to heaven, and the inscription above her, "Mother of God," she is not here² the presiding deity. It is the Cross that is first seen, and always, burning in the center of the temple; and every dome and hollow of its roof has the figure of Christ in the utmost height of it, raised in power, or returning in judgment.

Nor is this interior without effect on the minds of the people. At every hour of the day there are groups collected before the various shrines, and solitary worshipers scattered through the darker places of the church, evidently in prayer both deep and reverent, and, for the most part, profoundly sorrowful. The devotees at the greater number of the renowned shrines of Romanism may be seen murmuring their appointed prayers with wandering eyes and unengaged gestures; but the step of the stranger does not disturb those who kneel on the pavement of St. Mark's; and hardly a moment passes, from early morning to sunset, in which we may not see some half-veiled figure enter beneath the Arabian porch, cast itself into long abasement on the floor of the temple, and then rising slowly with more confirmed step, and with a passionate kiss and clasp of the arms given to the feet of the crucifix, by which the lamps burn always in the northern aisle, leave the church, as if comforted.

But we must not hastily conclude from this that the nobler characters of the building have at present any influence in fostering a devotional spirit. There is distress enough in Venice to bring many to their knees, without excitement from external imagery; and whatever there may be in the temper

¹St. Matthew, iii, 10.

²There is an implied reference to the church of San Donato at Murano, described in the preceding chapter, in which the Virgin is "the presiding deity."

of the worship offered in St. Mark's more than can be accounted for by reference to the unhappy circumstances of the city, is assuredly not owing either to the beauty of its architecture or to the impressiveness of the Scripture histories embodied in its mosaics. That it has a peculiar effect, however slight, on the popular mind, may perhaps be safely conjectured from the number of worshipers which it attracts, while the churches of St. Paul and the Frari, larger in size and more central in position, are left comparatively empty.¹ But this effect is altogether to be ascribed to its richer assemblage of those sources of influence which address themselves to the commonest instincts of the human mind, and which, in all ages and countries, have been more or less employed in the support of superstition. Darkness and mystery; confused recesses of building; artificial light employed in small quantity, but maintained

¹The mere warmth of St. Mark's in winter, which is much greater than that of the other two churches above named, must, however, be taken into consideration, as one of the most efficient causes of its being then more frequented (Ruskin's note).

with a constancy which seems to give it a kind of sacredness; preciousness of material easily comprehended by the vulgar eye; close air loaded with a sweet and peculiar odor associated only with religious services, solemn music, and tangible idols or images having popular legends attached to them,—these, the stage properties of superstition, which have been from the beginning of the world, and must be to the end of it, employed by all nations, whether openly savage or nominally civilized, to produce a false awe in minds incapable of apprehending the true nature of the Deity, are assembled in St. Mark's to a degree, as far as I know, unexampled in any other European church. The arts of the Magus and the Brahmin are exhausted in the animation of a paralyzed Christianity; and the popular sentiment which these arts excite is to be regarded by us with no more respect than we should have considered ourselves justified in rendering to the devotion of the worshipers at Eleusis, Ellora, or Edfou.²

²Ellora is in Hyderabad, India; Edfou in upper Egypt.

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888)

Arnold was born at Laleham, in Middlesex, on 24 December, 1822. His father, Thomas Arnold, later became famous as the head-master of Rugby School, and the son, widely as his thought came to diverge from his father's, never ceased to feel the influence of the simple and powerful personality which, by his work at Rugby, transformed English public-school life. Arnold was sent first to his father's school, the Wykehamist College of Winchester, but after a year there was brought to Rugby, where he remained four years, until, in 1841, he went up to Balliol College, Oxford, with a classical scholarship. He took his B. A. in 1845. He failed to secure a first class, but nevertheless was soon elected a Fellow of Oriel College. This opened up to him the possibility of an academic career but, deeply as Arnold loved Oxford throughout his life, he seems never seriously to have considered remaining there; and one feels that he was right if he thought that his nature demanded the contacts of a larger world and could ill brook the small restraints of academic life. In 1847 he became a private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, who was then President of the Privy Council. Four years later he was appointed an inspector of schools. He took this post, as he many years later told an audience of teachers, not because he liked the work or indeed at first knew anything about it, but in order to be able to marry. And shortly thereafter he was married to Miss Frances Lucy Wightman, who made a home for him which during the remainder of his life was his chief resource and stay. Arnold never grew to like—as who could have grown to like?—the incessant drudgery of his educational post, but he soon came to see the importance of his work and to value his position for the influence it gave him in improving education. His post also gave Arnold various opportunities for travel on the Continent, and enabled him to publish some of the best and wisest writing on education that the nineteenth century saw. He remained an inspector of schools until within a few years of his death on 15 April, 1888.

It is a severe loss to literature that Arnold was thus compelled to earn his living; for the greater part of his literary work had to be done in time stolen, so to say, from his official duties. That he accomplished as much as he did in untoward circumstances fairly indicates that he would have been able to do much more had he ever been given the opportunity. He began his literary career as a poet, publishing *The Strayed Reveler and Other Poems* anonymously in 1849. Three years later he published, also anonymously, *Empedocles on Etna and Other Poems*. Both volumes were soon withdrawn from sale because of Arnold's dissatisfaction with some of the poems they contained. In 1853 and 1855, however, the greater number of the earlier poems were re-issued, together with some new ones, among the latter *Sohrab and Rustum* and *The Scholar Gypsy*. *Merope*, a dramatic poem, was published in 1858, and *New Poems* in 1867. Meanwhile Arnold had been elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1857, a post which he held, as was then possible, for two terms, until 1867. The duties of this position turned his attention definitely to criticism, and from the early eighteen-sixties his work was almost exclusively critical, as he wrote little or no poetry after 1867. His lectures *On Translating Homer* were published in 1861, *Essays in Criticism* in 1865, and *Celtic Literature* in 1867. In a famous and often disputed phrase Arnold defined poetry as a "criticism of life." It is a phrase which, at any rate, may stand for the poetry which Arnold valued most highly, and it may stand, too, for Arnold's own critical work. Like Ruskin, Arnold was unable to consider artistic excellence as a thing separable from the common life of men, and like Ruskin he was inevitably drawn on from the consideration of art to consideration of the social and moral problems raised by industrial democracies. His major contributions to the discussion of these questions are contained in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), *St. Paul and Protestantism* (1870), *Literature and Dogma* (1873), and *God and the Bible* (1875). *The Discourses in America* (1885) were delivered in a lecture-tour of the United States in the winter of 1883-1884.

In a letter to his mother written in 1869 Arnold says: "My poems represent, on the whole, the main movement of mind of the last quarter of a century, and thus they will probably have their day as people become conscious to themselves of what that movement of mind is, and interested in the literary productions which reflect it. It might be fairly urged that I have less poetical sentiment than Tennyson, and less intellectual vigor and abundance than Browning; yet, because I have perhaps more of a fusion of the two than either of them, and have more regularly applied that fusion to the main line of modern development, I am likely enough to have my turn, as they have had theirs." The passage of years has served to show that Arnold's verdict on his own poetry was essentially just. His verse has never been widely popular, but it securely holds, and will long hold, the attention of thoughtful people. Likewise his criticism, whether one can agree with all his conclusions or not, will long be read for its persuasive charm, its ease and urbanity, its combined lightness and sureness of touch, and its honest good faith always showing beneath the surface of Arnold's playfulness.

THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM AT THE PRESENT TIME¹

MANY objections have been made to a proposition which, in some remarks of mine on translating Homer, I ventured to put forth; a proposition about criticism, and its importance at the present day. I said: "Of the literature of France and Germany, as of the intellect of Europe in general, the main effort, for now many years, has been a critical effort; the endeavor, in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is."² I added, that owing to the operation in English literature of certain causes, "almost the last thing for which one would come to English literature is just that very thing which now Europe most desires,—criticism"; and that the power and value of English literature was thereby impaired. More than one rejoinder declared that the importance I here assigned to criticism was excessive, and asserted the inherent superiority of the creative effort of the human spirit over its critical effort. And the other day, having been led by an excellent notice of Wordsworth³ published in the *North British Review*, to turn again to his biography, I found, in the words of this great man, whom I, for one, must always listen to with the profoundest respect, a sentence passed on the critic's business,

The initial essay in *Essays in Criticism*, 1865. It had previously been published in the *National Review*, November, 1864. The essays and poems by Arnold in this volume are reprinted with the permission of the Macmillan Company.

²This and the following quotation are from the conclusion of the second lecture in Arnold's *On Translating Homer*.

³I cannot help thinking that a practice, common in England during the last century, and still followed in France, of printing a notice of this kind,—a notice by a competent critic,—to serve as an introduction to an eminent author's works, might be revived among us with advantage. To introduce all succeeding editions of Wordsworth, Mr. Shairp's notice (it is permitted, I hope, to mention his name) might, it seems to me, excellently serve; it is written from the point of view of an admirer, nay, of a disciple, and that is right; but then the disciple must be also, as in this case he is, a critic, a man of letters, not, as too often happens, some relation or friend with no qualification for his task except affection for his author (Arnold's note). John Campbell Shairp was Professor of Poetry at Oxford from 1877 to 1887.

which seems to justify every possible disparagement of it. Wordsworth says in one of his letters:

The writers in these publications [the *Reviews*], while they prosecute their inglorious employment, can not be supposed to be in a state of mind very favorable for being affected by the finer influences of a thing so pure as genuine poetry.

And a trustworthy reporter of his conversation quotes a more elaborate judgment to the same effect:

Wordsworth holds the critical power very low, infinitely lower than the inventive; and he said to-day that if the quantity of time consumed in writing critiques on the works of others were given to original composition, of whatever kind it might be, it would be much better employed; it would make a man find out sooner his own level, and it would do infinitely less mischief. A false or malicious criticism may do much injury to the minds of others; a stupid invention, either in prose or verse, is quite harmless.

It is almost too much to expect of poor human nature, that a man capable of producing some effect in one line of literature, should, for the greater good of society, voluntarily doom himself to impotence and obscurity in another. Still less is this to be expected from men addicted to the composition of the "false or malicious criticism," of which Wordsworth speaks. However, everybody would admit that a false or malicious criticism had better never have been written. Everybody, too, would be willing to admit, as a general proposition, that the critical faculty is lower than the inventive. But is it true that criticism is really, in itself, a baneful and injurious employment; is it true that all time given to writing critiques on the works of others would be much better employed if it were given to original composition, of whatever kind this may be? Is it true that Johnson had better have gone on producing more *Irenes*⁴ instead of writing his *Lives of the Poets*; nay, is it certain that Wordsworth himself was better employed in making his Ecclesiastical Sonnets, than when he made his celebrated Preface,⁵ so full of criticism, and criticism of the works of others? Wordsworth was himself a

⁴*Irene*, Dr. Johnson's only play, is a classical tragedy. It ran for nine nights at Drury Lane Theater in 1749.

⁵The Preface to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*.

great critic, and it is to be sincerely regretted that he has not left us more criticism; Goethe was one of the greatest of critics, and we may sincerely congratulate ourselves that he has left us so much criticism. Without wasting time over the exaggeration which Wordsworth's judgment on criticism clearly contains, or over an attempt to trace the causes,—not difficult I think to be traced,—which may have led Wordsworth to this exaggeration, a critic may with advantage seize an occasion for trying his own conscience, and for asking himself of what real service, at any given moment, the practice of criticism either is, or may be made, to his own mind and spirit, and to the minds and spirits of others.

The critical power is of lower rank than the creative. True; but in assenting to this proposition, one or two things are to be kept in mind. It is undeniable that the exercise of a creative power, that a free creative activity, is the true function of man; it is proved to be so by man's finding in it his true happiness. But it is undeniable, also, that men may have the sense of exercising this free creative activity in other ways than in producing great works of literature or art; if it were not so, all but a very few men would be shut out from the true happiness of all men; they may have it in well-doing, they may have it in learning, they may have it even in criticizing. This is one thing to be kept in mind. Another is, that the exercise of the creative power in the production of great works of literature or art, however high this exercise of it may rank, is not at all epochs and under all conditions possible; and that therefore labor may be vainly spent in attempting it, which might with more fruit be used in preparing for it, in rendering it possible. This creative power works with elements, with materials; what if it has not those materials, those elements, ready for its use? In that case it must surely wait till they are ready. Now in literature,—I will limit myself to literature, for it is about literature that the question arises,—the elements with which the creative power works are ideas; the best ideas, on every matter which literature touches, current at the time; at any rate we may lay it down as certain that in modern literature no manifestation of the

creative power not working with these can be very important or fruitful. And I say *current* at the time, not merely accessible at the time; for creative literary genius does not principally show itself in discovering new ideas; that is rather the business of the philosopher: the grand work of literary genius is a work of synthesis and exposition, not of analysis and discovery; its gift lies in the faculty of being happily inspired by a certain intellectual and spiritual atmosphere, by a certain order of ideas, when it finds itself in them; of dealing divinely with these ideas, presenting them in the most effective and attractive combinations,—making beautiful works with them, in short. But it must have the atmosphere, it must find itself amidst the order of ideas, in order to work freely; and these it is not so easy to command. This is why great creative epochs in literature are so rare; this is why there is so much that is unsatisfactory in the productions of many men of real genius; because for the creation of a master-work of literature two powers must concur, the power of the man and the power of the moment, and the man is not enough without the moment; the creative power has, for its happy exercise, appointed elements, and those elements are not in its own control.

Now, they are more within the control of the critical power. It is the business of the critical power, as I said in the words already quoted, "in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is." Thus it tends, at last, to make an intellectual situation of which the creative power can profitably avail itself. It tends to establish an order of ideas, if not absolutely true, yet true by comparison with that which it displaces; to make the best ideas prevail. Presently these new ideas reach society, the touch of truth is the touch of life, and there is a stir and growth everywhere; out of this stir and growth come the creative epochs of literature.

Or, to narrow our range, and quit these considerations of the general march of genius and of society, considerations which are apt to become too abstract and impalpable,—every one can see that a poet, for instance, ought to know life and the world before dealing with them in poetry; and life

and the world being, in modern times, very complex things, the creation of a modern poet, to be worth much, implies a great critical effort behind it; else it must be a comparatively poor, barren, and short-lived affair. This is why Byron's poetry had so little endurance in it, and Goethe's so much; both Byron and Goethe had a great productive power, but Goethe's was nourished by a great critical effort providing the true materials for it, and Byron's was not; Goethe knew life and the world, the poet's necessary subjects, much more comprehensively and thoroughly than Byron. He knew a great deal more of them, and he knew them much more as they really are.

It has long seemed to me that the burst of creative activity in our literature, through the first quarter of this century, had about it, in fact, something premature; and that from this cause its productions are doomed, most of them, in spite of the sanguine hopes which accompanied and do still accompany them, to prove hardly more lasting than the productions of far less splendid epochs. And this prematurity comes from its having proceeded without having its proper data, without sufficient materials to work with. In other words, the English poetry of the first quarter of this century, with plenty of energy, plenty of creative force, did not know enough. This makes Byron so empty of matter, Shelley so incoherent, Wordsworth even, profound as he is, yet so wanting in completeness and variety. Wordsworth cared little for books, and disparaged Goethe. I admire Wordsworth, as he is, so much that I cannot wish him different; and it is vain, no doubt, to imagine such a man different from what he is, to suppose that he could have been different; but surely the one thing wanting to make Wordsworth an even greater poet than he is,—his thought richer, and his influence of wider application,—was that he should have read more books, among them, no doubt, those of that Goethe whom he disparaged without reading him.

But to speak of books and reading may easily lead to a misunderstanding here. It was not really books and reading that lacked to our poetry, at this epoch; Shelley had plenty of reading, Coleridge had immense reading. Pindar and Sophocles—as we all

say so glibly, and often with so little discernment of the real import of what we are saying—had not many books; Shakespeare was no deep reader. True; but in the Greece of Pindar and Sophocles, in the England of Shakespeare, the poet lived in a current of ideas in the highest degree animating and nourishing to the creative power; society was, in the fullest measure, permeated by fresh thought, intelligent and alive; and this state of things is the true basis for the creative power's exercise,—in this it finds its data, its materials, truly ready for its hand; all the books and reading in the world are only valuable as they are helps to this. Even when this does not actually exist, books and reading may enable a man to construct a kind of semblance of it in his own mind, a world of knowledge and intelligence in which he may live and work: this is by no means an equivalent, to the artist, for the nationally diffused life and thought of the epochs of Sophocles or Shakespeare, but, besides that it may be a means of preparation for such epochs, it does really constitute, if many share in it, a quickening and sustaining atmosphere of great value. Such an atmosphere the many-sided learning and the long and widely-combined critical effort of Germany formed for Goethe, when he lived and worked. There was no national glow of life and thought there, as in the Athens of Pericles, or the England of Elizabeth. That was the poet's weakness. But there was a sort of equivalent for it in the complete culture and unfettered thinking of a large body of Germans. That was his strength. In the England of the first quarter of this century, there was neither a national glow of life and thought, such as we had in the age of Elizabeth, nor yet a culture and a force of learning and criticism, such as were to be found in Germany. Therefore the creative power of poetry wanted, for success in the highest sense, materials and a basis; a thorough interpretation of the world was necessarily denied to it.

At first sight it seems strange that out of the immense stir of the French Revolution and its age should not have come a crop of works of genius equal to that which came out of the stir of the great productive time of Greece, or out of that of the Renaissance, with its powerful episode the Reformation.

But the truth is that the stir of the French Revolution took a character which essentially distinguished it from such movements as these. These were, in the main, disinterestedly intellectual and spiritual movements; movements in which the human spirit looked for its satisfaction in itself and in the increased play of its own activity: the French Revolution took a political, practical character. The movement which went on in France under the old *régime*, from 1700 to 1789, was far more really akin than that of the Revolution itself to the movement of the Renaissance; the France of Voltaire and Rousseau told far more powerfully upon the mind of Europe than the France of the Revolution. Goethe reproached this last expressly with having "thrown quiet culture back." Nay, and the true key to how much in our Byron, even in our Wordsworth, is this!—that they had their source in a great movement of feeling, not in a great movement of mind. The French Revolution, however,—that object of so much blind love and so much blind hatred,—found undoubtedly its motive-power in the intelligence of men and not in their practical sense;—this is what distinguishes it from the English Revolution of Charles the First's time; this is what makes it a more spiritual event than our Revolution, an event of much more powerful and world-wide interest, though practically less successful;—it appeals to an order of ideas which are universal, certain, permanent. 1789 asked of a thing, Is it rational? 1642 asked of a thing, Is it legal? or, when it went furthest, Is it according to conscience? This is the English fashion; a fashion to be treated, within its own sphere, with the highest respect; for its success, within its own sphere, has been prodigious. But what is law in one place, is not law in another; what is law here to-day, is not law even here to-morrow; and as for conscience, what is binding on one man's conscience is not binding on another's; the old woman who threw her stool at the head of the surpliced minister in St. Giles's Church at Edinburgh¹ obeyed an impulse to which millions

of the human race may be permitted to remain strangers. But the prescriptions of reason are absolute, unchanging, of universal validity; *to count by tens is the easiest way of counting*,—that is a proposition of which every one, from here to the Antipodes, feels the force; at least, I should say so, if we did not live in a country where it is not impossible that any morning we may find a letter in the *Times* declaring that a decimal coinage is an absurdity. That a whole nation should have been penetrated with an enthusiasm for pure reason, and with an ardent zeal for making its prescriptions triumph, is a very remarkable thing, when we consider how little of mind, or anything so worthy and quickening as mind, comes into the motives which alone, in general, impel great masses of men. In spite of the extravagant direction given to this enthusiasm, in spite of the crimes and follies in which it lost itself, the French Revolution derives from the force, truth, and universality of the ideas which it took for its law, and from the passion with which it could inspire a multitude for these ideas, a unique and still living power; it is—it will probably long remain—the greatest, the most animating event in history. And, as no sincere passion for the things of the mind, even though it turn out in many respects an unfortunate passion, is ever quite thrown away and quite barren of good, France has reaped from hers one fruit, the natural and legitimate fruit, though not precisely the grand fruit she expected; she is the country in Europe where *the people* is most alive.

But the mania for giving an immediate political and practical application to all these fine ideas of the reason was fatal. Here an Englishman is in his element: on this theme we can all go on for hours. And all we are in the habit of saying on it has undoubtedly a great deal of truth. Ideas cannot be too much prized in and for themselves, cannot be too much lived with; but to transport them abruptly into the world of politics and practice, violently to revolutionize this world to their bidding,—that is quite another thing. There is the world of ideas and there is the world of practice; the French are often for suppressing the one and the English the other; but neither is to be suppressed. A member of the House

¹The story to which Arnold alludes is apocryphal, but had its origin in riotous actions which took place in the church on Sunday, 23 July, 1637, when Archbishop Laud's Liturgy was introduced there.

of Commons said to me the other day: "That a thing is an anomaly, I consider to be no objection to it whatever." I venture to think he was wrong; that a thing is an anomaly *is* an objection to it, but absolutely and in the sphere of ideas: it is not necessarily, under such and such circumstances, or at such and such a moment, an objection to it in the sphere of politics and practice. Joubert¹ has said beautifully: *C'est la force et le droit qui règlent toutes choses dans le monde; la force en attendant le droit.* (Force and right are the governors of this world; force till right is ready.) *Force till right is ready*; and till right is ready, force, the existing order of things, is justified, is the legitimate ruler. But right is something moral, and implies inward recognition, free assent of the will; we are not ready for right, —right, so far as we are concerned, *is not ready*,—until we have attained this sense of seeing it and willing it. The way in which for us it may change and transform force, the existing order of things, and become, in its turn, the legitimate ruler of the world, will depend on the way in which, when our time comes, we see it and will it. Therefore for other people enamored of their own newly discerned right, to attempt to impose it upon us as ours, and violently to substitute their right for our force, is an act of tyranny, and to be resisted. It sets at nought the second great half of our maxim, *force till right is ready*. This was the grand error of the French Revolution; and its movement of ideas, by quitting the intellectual sphere and rushing furiously into the political sphere, ran, indeed, a prodigious and memorable course, but produced no such intellectual fruit as the movement of ideas of the Renaissance, and created, in opposition to itself, what I may call an *epoch of concentration*. The great force of that epoch of concentration was England; and the great voice of that epoch of concentration was Burke. It is the fashion to treat Burke's writings on the French Revolution as superannuated and conquered by the event; as the eloquent but unphilosophical tirades of bigotry and prejudice. I will not deny that they are often disfigured by the

violence and passion of the moment, and that in some directions Burke's view was bounded, and his observation therefore at fault; but on the whole, and for those who can make the needful corrections, what distinguishes these writings is their profound, permanent, fruitful, philosophical truth; they contain the true philosophy of an epoch of concentration, dissipate the heavy atmosphere which its own nature is apt to engender round it, and make its resistance rational instead of mechanical.

But Burke is so great because, almost alone in England, he brings thought to bear upon politics, he saturates politics with thought; it is his accident that his ideas were at the service of an epoch of concentration, not of an epoch of expansion; it is his characteristic that he so lived by ideas, and had such a source of them welling up within him, that he could float even an epoch of concentration and English Tory politics with them. It does not hurt him that Dr. Price² and the Liberals were enraged with him; it does not even hurt him that George the Third and the Tories were enchanted with him. His greatness is that he lived in a world which neither English Liberalism nor English Toryism is apt to enter;—the world of ideas, not the world of catchwords and party habits. So far is it from being really true of him that he "to party gave up what was meant for mankind,"³ that at the very end of his fierce struggle with the French Revolution, after all his invectives against its false pretensions, hollowness, and madness, with his sincere conviction of its mischievousness, he can close a memorandum on the best means of combating it, some of the last pages he ever wrote,⁴—the *Thoughts on French Affairs*, in December, 1791,—with these striking words:

The evil is stated, in my opinion, as it exists. The remedy must be where power, wisdom, and information, I hope, are more united with good intentions than they can be with me. I have done with this subject, I believe, for ever. It has given me many anxious moments for the last two

²Richard Price (1723–1791), a Unitarian minister, a moralist, and an advocate of civil and religious liberty.

³From Goldsmith's *Retaliation*, l. 32.

⁴Arnold is here in error. Burke wrote his *Letter to a Noble Lord* and his *Letters on a Regicidal Peace* in 1796 (he died in 1797).

¹Joseph Joubert (1754–1824), French moralist and man of letters. The seventh essay in Arnold's *Essays in Criticism* is devoted to him.

years. *If a great change is to be made in human affairs, the minds of men will be fitted to it; the general opinions and feelings will draw that way. Every fear, every hope will forward it; and then they who persist in opposing this mighty current in human affairs, will appear rather to resist the decrees of Providence itself, than the mere designs of men. They will not be resolute and firm, but perverse and obstinate.*

That return of Burke upon himself has always seemed to me one of the finest things in English literature, or indeed in any literature. That is what I call living by ideas; when one side of a question has long had your earnest support, when all your feelings are engaged, when you hear all round you no language but one, when your party talks this language like a steam-engine and can imagine no other,—still to be able to think, still to be irresistibly carried, if so it be, by the current of thought to the opposite side of the question, and, like Balaam,¹ to be unable to speak anything *but what the Lord has put in your mouth*. I know nothing more striking, and I must add that I know nothing more un-English.

For the Englishman in general is like my friend the Member of Parliament, and believes, point-blank, that for a thing to be an anomaly is absolutely no objection to it whatever. He is like the Lord Auckland² of Burke's day, who, in a memorandum on the French Revolution, talks of "certain miscreants, assuming the name of philosophers, who have presumed themselves capable of establishing a new system of society." The Englishman has been called a political animal, and he values what is political and practical so much that ideas easily become objects of dislike in his eyes, and thinkers "miscreants," because ideas and thinkers have rashly meddled with politics and practice. This would be all very well if the dislike and neglect confined themselves to ideas transported out of their own sphere, and meddling rashly with practice; but they are inevitably extended to ideas as such, and to the whole life of intelligence; practice is everything, a free play of the mind is nothing. The notion of the free play of the mind upon all subjects

being a pleasure in itself, being an object of desire, being an essential provider of elements without which a nation's spirit, whatever compensations it may have for them, must, in the long run, die of inanition, hardly enters into an Englishman's thoughts. It is noticeable that the word *curiosity*, which in other languages is used in a good sense, to mean, as a high and fine quality of man's nature, just this disinterested love of a free play of the mind on all subjects, for its own sake,—it is noticeable, I say, that this word has in our language no sense of the kind, no sense but a rather bad and disparaging one. But criticism, real criticism, is essentially the exercise of this very quality; it obeys an instinct prompting it to try to know the best that is known and thought in the world, irrespectively of practice, politics, and everything of the kind; and to value knowledge and thought as they approach this best, without the intrusion of any other considerations whatever. This is an instinct for which there is, I think, little original sympathy in the practical English nature, and what there was of it has undergone a long benumbing period of blight and suppression in the epoch of concentration which followed the French Revolution.

But epochs of concentration cannot well endure for ever; epochs of expansion, in the due course of things, follow them. Such an epoch of expansion seems to be opening in this country. In the first place all danger of a hostile forcible pressure of foreign ideas upon our practice has long disappeared; like the traveler in the fable,³ therefore, we begin to wear our cloak a little more loosely. Then, with a long peace, the ideas of Europe steal gradually and amicably in, and mingle, though in infinitesimally small quantities at a time, with our own notions. Then, too, in spite of all that is said about the absorbing and brutalizing influence of our passionate material progress, it seems to me indisputable that this progress is likely, though not certain, to lead in the end to an apparition of intellectual life; and that man, after he has made himself perfectly comfortable and has now to determine what to do with himself next, may begin to remember

¹See Numbers, xxii, 38.

²William Eden (1744–1814), raised to the peerage in 1789.

³Of Æsop. The fable tells of a contest between the North Wind and the Sun as to which would first strip a man of his clothes.

that he has a mind, and that the mind may be made the source of great pleasure. I grant it is mainly the privilege of faith, at present, to discern this end to our railways, our business, and our fortune-making; but we shall see if, here as elsewhere, faith is not in the end the true prophet. Our ease, our traveling, and our unbounded liberty to hold just as hard and securely as we please to the practice to which our notions have given birth, all tend to beget an inclination to deal a little more freely with these notions themselves, to canvass them a little, to penetrate a little into their real nature. Flutterings of curiosity, in the foreign sense of the word, appear amongst us, and it is in these that criticism must look to find its account. Criticism first; a time of true creative activity, perhaps,—which, as I have said, must inevitably be preceded amongst us by a time of criticism,—hereafter, when criticism has done its work.

It is of the last importance that English criticism should clearly discern what rule for its course, in order to avail itself of the field now opening to it, and to produce fruit for the future, it ought to take. The rule may be summed up in one word,—*disinterestedness*. And how is criticism to show disinterestedness? By keeping aloof from practice; by resolutely following the law of its own nature, which is to be a free play of the mind on all subjects which it touches; by steadily refusing to lend itself to any of those ulterior, political, practical considerations about ideas which plenty of people will be sure to attach to them, which perhaps ought often to be attached to them, which in this country at any rate are certain to be attached to them quite sufficiently, but which criticism has really nothing to do with. Its business is, as I have said, simply to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and by in its turn making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas. Its business is to do this with inflexible honesty, with due ability; but its business is to do no more, and to leave alone all questions of practical consequences and applications, questions which will never fail to have due prominence given to them. Else criticism, besides being really false to its own nature, merely continues in the old rut which it has hitherto followed in this

country, and will certainly miss the chance now given to it. For what is at present the bane of criticism in this country? It is that practical considerations cling to it and stifle it; it subserves interests not its own; our organs of criticism are organs of men and parties having practical ends to serve, and with them those practical ends are the first thing and the play of mind the second; so much play of mind as is compatible with the prosecution of those practical ends is all that is wanted. An organ like the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, having for its main function to understand and utter the best that is known and thought in the world, existing, it may be said, as just an organ for a free play of the mind, we have not; but we have the *Edinburgh Review*, existing as an organ of the old Whigs, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that; we have the *Quarterly Review*, existing as an organ of the Tories, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that; we have the *British Quarterly Review*, existing as an organ of the political Dissenters, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that; we have the *Times*, existing as an organ of the common, satisfied, well-to-do Englishman, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that. And so on through all the various fractions, political and religious, of our society; every fraction has, as such, its organ of criticism, but the notion of combining all fractions in the common pleasure of a free disinterested play of mind meets with no favor. Directly this play of mind wants to have more scope, and to forget the pressure of practical considerations a little, it is checked, it is made to feel the chain; we saw this the other day in the extinction, so much to be regretted, of the *Home and Foreign Review*; perhaps in no organ of criticism in this country was there so much knowledge, so much play of mind; but these could not save it: the *Dublin Review* subordinates play of mind to the practical business of English and Irish Catholicism, and lives. It must needs be that men should act in sects and parties, that each of these sects and parties should have its organ, and should make this organ subserve the interests of its action; but it would be well, too, that there should be a criticism, not the minister of these interests,

not their enemy, but absolutely and entirely independent of them. No other criticism will ever attain any real authority or make any real way towards its end,—the creating a current of true and fresh ideas.

It is because criticism has so little kept in the pure intellectual sphere, has so little detached itself from practice, has been so directly polemical and controversial, that it has so ill accomplished, in this country, its best spiritual work; which is to keep man from a self-satisfaction which is retarding and vulgarizing, to lead him towards perfection, by making his mind dwell upon what is excellent in itself, and the absolute beauty and fitness of things. A polemical practical criticism makes men blind even to the ideal imperfection of their practice, makes them willingly assert its ideal perfection, in order the better to secure it against attack; and clearly this is narrowing and baneful for them. If they were reassured on the practical side, speculative considerations of ideal perfection they might be brought to entertain, and their spiritual horizon would thus gradually widen. Mr. Adderley¹ says to the Warwickshire farmers:

Talk of the improvement of breed! Why, the race we ourselves represent, the men and women, the old Anglo-Saxon race, are the best breed in the whole world. . . . The absence of a too enervating climate, too unclouded skies, and a too luxurious nature, has produced so vigorous a race of people, and has rendered us so superior to all the world.

Mr. Roebuck² says to the Sheffield cutlers:

I look around me and ask what is the state of England? Is not property safe? Is not every man able to say what he likes? Can you not walk from one end of England to the other in perfect security? I ask you whether, the world over or in past history, there is anything like it? Nothing. I pray that our unrivaled happiness may last.

Now obviously there is a peril for poor human nature in words and thoughts of such exuberant self-satisfaction, until we

find ourselves safe in the streets of the Celestial City.

*Das wenige verschwindet leicht dem Blicke
Der vorwärts sieht, wie viel noch übrig bleibt*³—

says Goethe; the little that is done seems nothing when we look forward and see how much we have yet to do. Clearly this is a better line of reflection for weak humanity, so long as it remains on this earthly field of labor and trial. But neither Mr. Adderley nor Mr. Roebuck is by nature inaccessible to considerations of this sort. They only lose sight of them owing to the controversial life we all lead, and the practical form which all speculation takes with us. They have in view opponents whose aim is not ideal, but practical; and in their zeal to uphold their own practice against these innovators, they go so far as even to attribute to this practice an ideal perfection. Somebody has been wanting to introduce a six-pound franchise,⁴ or to abolish church-rates,⁵ or to collect agricultural statistics by force, or to diminish local self-government. How natural, in reply to such proposals, very likely improper or ill-timed, to go a little beyond the mark, and to say stoutly, "Such a race of people as we stand, so superior to all the world! The old Anglo-Saxon race, the best breed in the whole world! I pray that our unrivaled happiness may last! I ask you whether, the world over or in past history, there is anything like it!" And so long as criticism answers this dithyramb by insisting that the old Anglo-Saxon race would be still more superior to all others if it had no church-rates, or that our unrivaled happiness would last yet longer with a six-pound franchise, so long will the strain, "The best breed in the whole world!" swell louder and louder, everything ideal and refining will be lost out of sight, and both the assailed and their critics will remain in a sphere, to say the truth, perfectly unvital, a sphere in which spiritual progression is impossible. But let criticism leave church-

³*Iphigenie auf Tauris*, I, ii, 91–92. Arnold translates the lines in the concluding portion of the sentence.

⁴*I.e.*, widen the franchise, which at this time was restricted to occupants of premises worth not less than £10 to the year.

⁵Taxes levied on assessed property in a parish for the maintenance of the church.

¹Charles Bowyer Adderley (1814–1905), first Baron Norton, a Tory statesman.

²The Right Hon. J. A. Roebuck (1801–1879), barrister and politician.

rates and the franchise alone, and in the most candid spirit, without a single lurking thought of practical innovation, confront with our dithyramb this paragraph on which I stumbled in a newspaper soon after reading Mr. Roebuck:

A shocking child murder has just been committed at Nottingham. A girl named Wragg left the workhouse there on Saturday morning with her young illegitimate child. The child was soon afterwards found dead on Mapperly Hills, having been strangled: Wragg is in custody.

Nothing but that; but, in juxtaposition with the absolute eulogies of Mr. Adderley and Mr. Roebuck, how eloquent, how suggestive are those few lines! "Our old Anglo-Saxon breed, the best in the whole world!"—how much that is harsh and ill-favored there is in this best! *Wragg!* If we are to talk of ideal perfection, of "the best in the whole world," has any one reflected what a touch of grossness in our race, what an original shortcoming in the more delicate spiritual perceptions, is shown by the natural growth amongst us of such hideous names,—Higginbottom, Stiggins, Bugg! In Ionia and Attica they were luckier in this respect than "the best race in the world"; by the Ilissus there was no Wragg, poor thing! And "our unrivaled happiness";—what an element of grimness, bareness, and hideousness mixes with it and blurs it; the workhouse, the dismal Mapperly Hills,—how dismal those who have seen them will remember;—the gloom, the smoke, the cold, the strangled illegitimate child! "I ask you whether the world over, or in past history, there is anything like it?" Perhaps not, one is inclined to answer; but at any rate, in that case, the world is very much to be pitied. And the final touch,—short, bleak, and inhuman: *Wragg is in custody.* The sex lost in the confusion of our unrivaled happiness; or (shall I say?) the superfluous Christian name lopped off by the straightforward vigor of our old Anglo-Saxon breed! There is profit for the spirit in such contrasts as this; criticism serves the cause of perfection by establishing them. By eluding sterile conflict, by refusing to remain in the sphere where alone narrow and relative conceptions have any worth and validity, criticism may diminish its momentary im-

portance, but only in this way has it a chance of gaining admittance for those wider and more perfect conceptions to which all its duty is really owed. Mr. Roebuck will have a poor opinion of an adversary who replies to his defiant songs of triumph only by murmuring under his breath, *Wragg is in custody*; but in no other way will these songs of triumph be induced gradually to moderate themselves, to get rid of what in them is excessive and offensive, and to fall into a softer and truer key.

It will be said that it is a very subtle and indirect action which I am thus prescribing for criticism, and that by embracing in this manner the Indian virtue of detachment and abandoning the sphere of practical life, it condemns itself to a slow and obscure work. Slow and obscure it may be, but it is the only proper work of criticism. The mass of mankind will never have any ardent zeal for seeing things as they are; very inadequate ideas will always satisfy them. On these inadequate ideas repose, and must repose, the general practice of the world. That is as much as saying that whoever sets himself to see things as they are will find himself one of a very small circle; but it is only by this small circle resolutely doing its own work that adequate ideas will ever get current at all. The rush and roar of practical life will always have a dizzying and attracting effect upon the most collected spectator, and tend to draw him into its vortex; most of all will this be the case where that life is so powerful as it is in England. But it is only by remaining collected, and refusing to lend himself to the point of view of the practical man, that the critic can do the practical man any service; and it is only by the greatest sincerity in pursuing his own course, and by at last convincing even the practical man of his sincerity, that he can escape misunderstandings which perpetually threaten him.

For the practical man is not apt for fine distinctions, and yet in these distinctions truth and the highest culture greatly find their account. But it is not easy to lead a practical man—unless you reassure him as to your practical intentions, you have no chance of leading him—to see that a thing which he has always been used to look at from one side only, which he greatly values,

and which, looked at from that side, more than deserves, perhaps, all the prizing and admiring which he bestows upon it,—that this thing, looked at from another side, may appear much less beneficent and beautiful, and yet retain all its claims to our practical allegiance. Where shall we find language innocent enough, how shall we make the spotless purity of our intentions evident enough, to enable us to say to the political Englishman that the British Constitution itself, which, seen from the practical side, looks such a magnificent organ of progress and virtue, seen from the speculative side, —with its compromises, its love of facts, its horror of theory, its studied avoidance of clear thoughts,—that, seen from this side, our august Constitution sometimes looks, —forgive me, shade of Lord Somers!¹—a colossal machine for the manufacture of Philistines?² How is Cobbett³ to say this and not be misunderstood, blackened as he is with the smoke of a lifelong conflict in the field of political practice? how is Mr. Carlyle to say it and not be misunderstood, after his furious raid into this field with his *Latter-Day Pamphlets*? how is Mr. Ruskin, after his pugnacious political economy? I say, the critic must keep out of the region of immediate practice in the political, social, humanitarian sphere, if he wants to make a beginning for that more free speculative treatment of things, which may perhaps one day make its benefits felt even in this sphere, but in a natural and thence irresistible manner.

Do what he will, however, the critic will still remain exposed to frequent misunderstandings, and nowhere so much as in this country. For here people are particularly indisposed even to comprehend that without this free disinterested treatment of things, truth and the highest culture are out of the question. So immersed are they in practical life, so accustomed to take all their notions from this life and its processes, that they are apt to think that truth and

culture themselves can be reached by the processes of this life, and that it is an impertinent singularity to think of reaching them in any other. "We are all *terre filii*,"⁴ cries their eloquent advocate; "all Philistines together. Away with the notion of proceeding by any other course than the course dear to the Philistines; let us have a social movement, let us organize and combine a party to pursue truth and new thought, let us call it *the liberal party*, and let us all stick to each other, and back each other up. Let us have no nonsense about independent criticism, and intellectual delicacy, and the few and the many; don't let us trouble ourselves about foreign thought; we shall invent the whole thing for ourselves as we go along: if one of us speaks well, applaud him; if one of us speaks ill, applaud him too; we are all in the same movement, we are all liberals, we are all in pursuit of truth." In this way the pursuit of truth becomes really a social, practical, pleasurable affair, almost requiring a chairman, a secretary, and advertisements; with the excitement of an occasional scandal, with a little resistance to give the happy sense of difficulty overcome; but, in general, plenty of bustle and very little thought. To act is so easy, as Goethe says; to think is so hard! It is true that the critic has many temptations to go with the stream, to make one of the party of movement, one of these *terre filii*; it seems ungracious to refuse to be a *terre filius*, when so many excellent people are; but the critic's duty is to refuse, or, if resistance is vain, at least to cry with Obermann: *Périssans en résistant*.⁵

How serious a matter it is to try and resist, I had ample opportunity of experiencing when I ventured some time ago to criticize the celebrated first volume of Bishop Colenso.⁶ The echoes of the storm which was

⁴"Children of earth—i.e., "nobodies."

⁵"Let us perish resisting." *Obermann* is the title of a series of letters written by Etienne Pivert de Senancour (1770-1846), published at Paris in 1804.

⁶So sincere is my dislike to all personal attack and controversy, that I abstain from reprinting, at this distance of time from the occasion which called them forth, the essays in which I criticized Dr. Colenso's book [the first volume of his examination of the *Pentateuch*]; I feel bound, however, after all that has passed, to make here a final declaration of my sincere impenitence for having published them. Nay, I

¹John, Baron Somers (1651-1716), Lord Chancellor. He was a member of the Convention Parliament in 1689.

²Arnold's term for the solid, respectable, unenlightened middle class.

³William Cobbett (1762-1835), essayist and politician.

then raised I still, from time to time, hear grumbling round me. That storm arose out of a misunderstanding almost inevitable. It is a result of no little culture to attain to a clear perception that science and religion are two wholly different things; the multitude will for ever confuse them, but happily that is of no great real importance, for while the multitude imagines itself to live by its false science, it does really live by its true religion. Dr. Colenso, however, in his first volume did all he could to strengthen the confusion,¹ and to make it dangerous. He did this with the best intentions, I freely admit, and with the most candid ignorance that this was the natural effect of what he was doing; but, says Joubert, "Ignorance, which in matters of morals extenuates the crime, is itself, in intellectual matters, a crime of the first order." I criticized Bishop Colenso's speculative confusion. Immediately there was a cry raised: "What is this? here is a liberal attacking a liberal. Do not you belong to the movement? are not you a friend of truth? Is not Bishop Colenso in pursuit of truth? then speak with proper respect of his book. Dr. Stanley² is another friend of truth, and you speak with proper respect of his book; why make these invidious differences? both books are excellent, admirable, liberal; Bishop Colenso's perhaps the most so, because it is the boldest, and will have the best practical consequences for the liberal cause. Do you want to encourage to the attack of a brother liberal his, and your, and our implacable enemies, the *Church and State Review* or the *Record*,

cannot forbear repeating yet once more, for his benefit and that of his readers, this sentence from my original remarks upon him: *There is truth of science and truth of religion; truth of science does not become truth of religion till it is made religious.* And I will add: Let us have all the science there is from the men of science; from the men of religion let us have religion (Arnold's note). J. W. Colenso (1814-1883) endeavored to show that the Pentateuch was largely unhistorical and that much of the legislation attributed to Moses was really centuries later in date.

¹It has been said I make it "a crime against literary criticism and the higher culture to attempt to inform the ignorant." Need I point out that the ignorant are not informed by being confirmed in a confusion? (Arnold's note.)

²Arthur Penrhyn Stanley (1815-1881), Dean of Westminster Abbey, who was a supporter of Colenso. "His book" is entitled *Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church* (1863-1865).

—the High Church rhinoceros and the Evangelical hyena? Be silent, therefore; or rather speak, speak as loud as ever you can, and go into ecstasies over the eighty and odd pigeons."³

But criticism cannot follow this coarse and indiscriminate method. It is unfortunately possible for a man in pursuit of truth to write a book which reposes upon a false conception. Even the practical consequences of a book are to genuine criticism no recommendation of it, if the book is, in the highest sense, blundering. I see that a lady who herself, too, is in pursuit of truth, and who writes with great ability, but a little too much, perhaps, under the influence of the practical spirit of the English liberal movement, classes Bishop Colenso's book and M. Renan's⁴ together, in her survey of the religious state of Europe,⁵ as facts of the same order, works, both of them, of "great importance"; "great ability, power, and skill"; Bishop Colenso's, perhaps the most powerful; at least, Miss Cobbe gives special expression to her gratitude that to Bishop Colenso "has been given the strength to grasp, and the courage to teach, truths of such deep import." In the same way, more than one popular writer has compared him to Luther. Now it is just this kind of false estimate which the critical spirit is, it seems to me, bound to resist. It is really the strongest possible proof of the low ebb at which, in England, the critical spirit is, that while the critical hit in the religious literature of Germany is Dr. Strauss's⁶ book, in that of France M. Renan's book, the book of Bishop Colenso is the critical hit in the religious literature of England.⁷ Bish-

³Colenso in commenting on Leviticus, x, 16, 20, had written: "The very pigeons to be brought as sin-offerings for the birth of children would have averaged according to the story more than 250 a day; and each priest would have had to eat daily more than 80 for his own portion 'in the most holy place!'"

⁴*The Vie de Jésus* (1863) by Ernest Renan (1823-1892).

⁵*Broken Lights* (1864) by Frances Power Cobbe (1822-1904).

⁶*Leben Jesu* (1835) by David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1874).

⁷It should be said that there was more of feeling than of logic in Arnold's attitude towards Colenso, that his work was of real importance, and that his chief conclusions are now generally accepted.

op Colenso's book reposes on a total misconception of the essential elements of the religious problem, as that problem is now presented for solution. To criticism, therefore, which seeks to have the best that is known and thought on this problem, it is, however well meant, of no importance whatever. M. Renan's book attempts a new synthesis of the elements furnished to us by the Four Gospels. It attempts, in my opinion, a synthesis, perhaps premature, perhaps impossible, certainly not successful. Up to the present time, at any rate, we must acquiesce in Fleury's sentence on such recastings of the Gospel-story: *Quiconque s' imagine la pouvoir mieux écrire, ne l'entend pas*.¹ M. Renan had himself passed by anticipation a like sentence on his own work, when he said: "If a new presentation of the character of Jesus were offered to me, I would not have it; its very clearness would be, in my opinion, the best proof of its insufficiency." His friends may with perfect justice rejoin that at the sight of the Holy Land, and of the actual scene of the Gospel-story, all the current of M. Renan's thoughts may have naturally changed, and a new casting of that story irresistibly suggested itself to him; and that this is just a case for applying Cicero's maxim: *Change of mind is not inconsistency—nemo doctus unquam mutationem consilii inconstantiam dixit esse*.² Nevertheless, for criticism, M. Renan's first thought must still be the truer one, as long as his new casting so fails more fully to commend itself, more fully (to use Coleridge's happy phrase about the Bible), to find us.³ Still M. Renan's attempt is, for criticism, of the most real interest and importance, since, with all its difficulty, a fresh synthesis of the New Testament data,—not a making war on them, in Voltaire's fashion, not a leaving them out of mind, in the world's fashion, but the putting a new construction upon them, the taking them from under the old, adoptive, traditional, unspiritual point of view and placing them under a new one,—is the very essence of the religious problem, as now presented;

¹Whoever imagines that he could write it better does not understand it. From the Preface to the *Ecclesiastical History* (1691) of Claude Fleury (1640–1723).

²*Letters to Atticus*, xvi, 7, 3.

³See *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, Letter I.

and only by efforts in this direction can it receive a solution.

Again, in the same spirit in which she judges Bishop Colenso, Miss Cobbe, like so many earnest liberals of our practical race, both here and in America, herself sets vigorously about a positive reconstruction of religion, about making a religion of the future out of hand, or at least setting about making it; we must not rest, she and they are always thinking and saying, in negative criticism, we must be creative and constructive; hence we have such works as her recent *Religious Duty*, and works still more considerable, perhaps, by others, which will be in everyone's mind. These works often have much ability; they often spring out of sincere convictions, and a sincere wish to do good; and they sometimes, perhaps, do good. Their fault is (if I may be permitted to say so) one which they have in common with the British College of Health, in the New Road. Every one knows the British College of Health; it is that building with the lion and the statue of the Goddess Hygeia¹ before it; at least, I am sure about the lion, though I am not absolutely certain about the Goddess Hygeia. This building does credit, perhaps, to the resources of Dr. Morrison² and his disciples; but it falls a good deal short of one's idea of what a British College of Health ought to be. In England, where we hate public interference and love individual enterprise, we have a whole crop of places like the British College of Health; the grand name without the grand thing. Unluckily, creditable to individual enterprise as they are, they tend to impair our taste by making us forget what more grandiose, noble, or beautiful character properly belongs to a public institution. The same may be said of the religions of the future of Miss Cobbe and others. Creditable, like the British College of Health, to the resources of their authors, they yet tend to make us forget what more grandiose, noble, or beautiful character properly belongs to religious constructions. The historic religions, with all their faults, have had this; it certainly belongs to the religious sentiment, when it truly flowers,

¹The goddess of health.

²James Morison (1770–1840).

to have this; and we impoverish our spirit if we allow a religion of the future without it. What then is the duty of criticism here? To take the practical point of view, to applaud the liberal movement and all its works,—its New Road religions of the future into the bargain,—for their general utility's sake? By no means; but to be perpetually dissatisfied with these works, while they perpetually fall short of a high and perfect ideal.

For criticism, these are elementary laws; but they never can be popular, and in this country they have been very little followed, and one meets with immense obstacles in following them. That is a reason for asserting them again and again. Criticism must maintain its independence of the practical spirit and its aims. Even with well-meant efforts of the practical spirit it must express dissatisfaction, if in the sphere of the ideal they seem impoverishing and limiting. It must not hurry on to the goal because of its practical importance. It must be patient, and know how to wait; and flexible, and know how to attach itself to things and how to withdraw from them. It must be apt to study and praise elements that for the fullness of spiritual perfection are wanted, even though they belong to a power which in the practical sphere may be maleficent. It must be apt to discern the spiritual shortcomings or illusions of powers that in the practical sphere may be beneficent. And this without any notion of favoring or injuring, in the practical sphere, one power or the other; without any notion of playing off, in this sphere, one power against the other. When one looks, for instance, at the English Divorce Court,—an institution which perhaps has its practical conveniences, but which in the ideal sphere is so hideous; an institution which neither makes divorce impossible nor makes it decent, which allows a man to get rid of his wife, or a wife of her husband, but makes them drag one another first, for the public edification, through a mire of unutterable infamy,—when one looks at this charming institution, I say, with its crowded benches, its newspaper-reports, and its money-compensations, this institution in which the gross unregenerate British Philistine has indeed stamped an image of himself,—one

may be permitted to find the marriage-theory of Catholicism refreshing and elevating. Or when Protestantism, in virtue of its supposed rational and intellectual origin, gives the law to criticism too magisterially, criticism may and must remind it that its pretensions, in this respect, are illusive and do it harm; that the Reformation was a moral rather than an intellectual event; that Luther's theory of grace no more exactly reflects the mind of the spirit than Bossuet's philosophy of history reflects it; and that there is no more antecedent probability of the Bishop of Durham's stock of ideas being agreeable to perfect reason than of Pope Pius the Ninth's. But criticism will not on that account forget the achievements of Protestantism in the practical and moral sphere; nor that, even in the intellectual sphere, Protestantism, though in a blind and stumbling manner, carried forward the Renaissance, while Catholicism threw itself violently across its path.

I lately heard a man of thought and energy contrasting the want of ardor and movement which he now found amongst young men in this country with what he remembered in his own youth, twenty years ago. "What reformers we were then!" he exclaimed; "what a zeal we had! how we canvassed every institution in Church and State, and were prepared to remodel them all on first principles!" He was inclined to regret, as a spiritual flagging, the lull which he saw. I am disposed rather to regard it as a pause in which the turn to a new mode of spiritual progress is being accomplished. Everything was long seen, by the young and ardent amongst us, in inseparable connection with politics and practical life; we have pretty well exhausted the benefits of seeing things in this connection, we have got all that can be got by so seeing them. Let us try a more disinterested mode of seeing them; let us betake ourselves more to the serener life of the mind and spirit. This life, too, may have its excesses and dangers; but they are not for us at present. Let us think of quietly enlarging our stock of true and fresh ideas, and not, as soon as we get an idea or half an idea, be running out with it into the street, and trying to make it rule there. Our ideas will, in the end, shape the world all the better for maturing a little. Perhaps

in fifty years' time it will in the English House of Commons be an objection to an institution that it is an anomaly, and my friend the Member of Parliament will shudder in his grave. But let us in the meanwhile rather endeavor that in twenty years' time it may, in English literature, be an objection to a proposition that it is absurd. That will be a change so vast, that the imagination almost fails to grasp it. *Ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo.*¹

If I have insisted so much on the course which criticism must take where politics and religion are concerned, it is because, where these burning matters are in question, it is most likely to go astray. I have wished, above all, to insist on the attitude which criticism should adopt towards everything; on its right tone and temper of mind. Then comes the question as to the subject-matter which criticism should most seek. Here, in general, its course is determined for it by the idea which is the law of its being; the idea of a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world, and thus to establish a current of fresh and true ideas. By the very nature of things, as England is not all the world, much of the best that is known and thought in the world cannot be of English growth, must be foreign; by the nature of things, again, it is just this that we are least likely to know, while English thought is streaming in upon us from all sides and takes excellent care that we shall not be ignorant of its existence; the English critic, therefore, must dwell much on foreign thought, and with particular heed on any part of it, which, while significant and fruitful in itself, is for any reason specially likely to escape him. Again, judging is often spoken of as the critic's one business; and so in some sense it is; but the judgment which almost insensibly forms itself in a fair and clear mind, along with fresh knowledge, is the valuable one; and thus knowledge, and ever fresh knowledge, must be the critic's great concern for himself; and it is by communicating fresh knowledge, and letting his own judgment pass along with it,—but insensibly, and in the second place not the first, as a sort of companion and clue,

not as an abstract lawgiver,—that he will generally do most good to his readers. Sometimes, no doubt, for the sake of establishing an author's place in literature, and his relation to a central standard (and if this is not done, how are we to get at our *best in the world?*), criticism may have to deal with a subject-matter so familiar that fresh knowledge is out of the question, and then it must be all judgment; an enunciation and detailed application of principles. Here the great safeguard is never to let oneself become abstract, always to retain an intimate and lively consciousness of the truth of what one is saying, and, the moment this fails us, to be sure that something is wrong. Still, under all circumstances, this mere judgment and application of principles is, in itself, not the most satisfactory work to the critic; like mathematics, it is tautological, and cannot well give us, like fresh learning, the sense of creative activity.

But stop, some one will say; all this talk is of no practical use to us whatever; this criticism of yours is not what we have in our minds when we speak of criticism; when we speak of critics and criticism, we mean critics and criticism of the current English literature of the day; when you offer to tell criticism its function, it is to this criticism that we expect you to address yourself. I am sorry for it, for I am afraid I must disappoint these expectations. I am bound by my own definition of criticism: *a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world.* How much of current English literature comes into this “best that is known and thought in the world”? Not very much. I fear; certainly less, at this moment, than of the current literature of France or Germany. Well, then, am I to alter my definition of criticism, in order to meet the requirements of a number of practising English critics, who, after all, are free in their choice of a business? That would be making criticism lend itself just to one of those alien practical considerations, which, I have said, are so fatal to it. One may say, indeed, to those who have to deal with the mass—so much better disregarded—of current English literature, that they may at all events endeavor, in dealing with this, to try it, so far as they can, by the standard of the

¹The cycle of the ages is born anew (Virgil, *Eclogue* IV, 5)

best that is known and thought in the world; one may say, that to get anywhere near this standard, every critic should try and possess one great literature, at least, besides his own; and the more unlike his own, the better. But, after all, the criticism I am really concerned with,—the criticism which alone can much help us for the future, the criticism which, throughout Europe, is at the present day meant, when so much stress is laid on the importance of criticism and the critical spirit,—is a criticism which regards Europe as being, for intellectual and spiritual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result; and whose members have, for their proper outfit, a knowledge of Greek, Roman, and Eastern antiquity, and of one another. Special, local, and temporary advantages being put out of account, that modern nation will in the intellectual and spiritual sphere make most progress, which most thoroughly carries out this programme. And what is that but saying that we too, all of us, as individuals, the more thoroughly we carry it out, shall make the more progress?

There is so much inviting us!—what are we to take? what will nourish us in growth towards perfection? That is the question which, with the immense field of life and of literature lying before him, the critic has to answer; for himself first, and afterwards for others. In this idea of the critic's business the essays brought together in the following pages¹ have had their origin; in this idea, widely different as are their subjects, they have, perhaps, their unity.

I conclude with what I said at the beginning: to have the sense of creative activity is the great happiness and the great proof of being alive, and it is not denied to criticism to have it; but then criticism must be sincere, simple, flexible, ardent, ever widening its knowledge. Then it may have, in no contemptible measure, a joyful sense of creative activity; a sense which a man of insight and conscience will prefer to what he might derive from a poor, starved, fragmentary, inadequate creation. And at some epochs no other creation is possible.

Still, in full measure, the sense of creative activity belongs only to genuine creation;

in literature we must never forget that. But what true man of letters ever can forget it? It is no such common matter for a gifted nature to come into possession of a current of true and living ideas, and to produce amidst the inspiration of them, that we are likely to underrate it. The epochs of Æschylus and Shakespeare make us feel their pre-eminence. In an epoch like those is, no doubt, the true life of a literature; there is the promised land, towards which criticism can only beckon. That promised land it will not be ours to enter, and we shall die in the wilderness: but to have desired to enter it, to have saluted it from afar, is already, perhaps, the best distinction among contemporaries; it will certainly be the best title to esteem with posterity.

LITERATURE AND SCIENCE²

PRACTICAL people talk with a smile of Plato and of his absolute ideas; and it is impossible to deny that Plato's ideas do often seem unpractical and impracticable, and especially when one views them in connection with the life of a great work-a-day world like the United States. The necessary staple of the life of such a world Plato regards with disdain; handicraft and trade and the working professions he regards with disdain; but what becomes of the life of an industrial modern community if you take handicraft and trade and the working professions out of it? The base mechanic arts and handicrafts, says Plato, bring about a natural weakness in the principle of excellence in a man, so that he cannot govern the ignoble growths in him, but nurses them, and cannot understand fostering any other. Those who exercise such arts and trades, as they have their bodies, he says, marred by their vulgar businesses, so they have their souls, too, bowed and broken by them. And if one of these uncomely people has a mind to seek self-culture and philosophy, Plato compares him to a bald little tinker, who has scraped together money, and has got his

²This essay was read as a Rede Lecture at Cambridge University and was published in the *Nineteenth Century* in 1882. It was then recast and used as a lecture in America in 1883-1884. It was reprinted in its later form (here reproduced) in *Discourses in America*, 1885.

¹I. e., in *Essays in Criticism*.

release from service, and has had a bath, and bought a new coat, and is rigged out like a bridegroom about to marry the daughter of his master who has fallen into poor and helpless estate.¹

Nor do the working professions fare any better than trade at the hands of Plato. He draws for us an inimitable picture of the working lawyer, and of his life of bondage; he shows how this bondage from his youth up has stunted and warped him, and made him small and crooked of soul, encompassing him with difficulties which he is not man enough to rely on justice and truth as means to encounter, but has recourse, for help out of them, to falsehood and wrong. And so, says Plato, this poor creature is bent and broken, and grows up from boy to man without a particle of soundness in him, although exceedingly smart and clever in his own esteem.²

One cannot refuse to admire the artist who draws these pictures. But we say to ourselves that his ideas show the influence of a primitive and obsolete order of things, when the warrior caste and the priestly caste were alone in honor, and the humble work of the world was done by slaves. We have now changed all that; the modern majority consists in work, as Emerson declares;³ and in work, we may add, principally of such plain and dusty kind as the work of cultivators of the ground, handicraftsmen, men of trade and business, men of the working professions. Above all is this true in a great industrious community such as that of the United States.

Now education, many people go on to say, is still mainly governed by the ideas of men like Plato, who lived when the warrior caste and the priestly or philosophical class were alone in honor, and the really useful part of the community were slaves. It is an education fitted for persons of leisure in such a community. This education passed from Greece and Rome to the feudal communities of Europe, where also the warrior caste and the priestly caste were alone held in honor, and where the really useful and working part of the community, though not nominally slaves as in the pagan world, were practically not

much better off than slaves, and not more seriously regarded. And how absurd it is, people end by saying, to inflict this education upon an industrious modern community, where very few indeed are persons of leisure, and the mass to be considered has not leisure, but is bound, for its own great good, and for the great good of the world at large, to plain labor and to industrial pursuits, and the education in question tends necessarily to make men dissatisfied with these pursuits and unfitted for them!

That is what is said. So far I must defend Plato, as to plead that his view of education and studies is in the general, as it seems to me, sound enough, and fitted for all sorts and conditions of men, whatever their pursuits may be. "An intelligent man," says Plato, "will prize those studies which result in his soul getting soberness, righteousness, and wisdom, and will less value the others."⁴ I cannot consider that a bad description of the aim of education, and of the motives which should govern us in the choice of studies, whether we are preparing ourselves for a hereditary seat in the English House of Lords or for the pork trade in Chicago.

Still I admit that Plato's world was not ours, that his scorn of trade and handicraft is fantastic, that he had no conception of a great industrial community such as that of the United States, and that such a community must and will shape its education to suit its own needs. If the usual education handed down to it from the past does not suit it, it will certainly before long drop this and try another. The usual education in the past has been mainly literary. The question is whether the studies which were long supposed to be the best for all of us are practically the best now; whether others are not better. The tyranny of the past, many think, weighs on us injuriously in the predominance given to letters in education. The question is raised whether, to meet the needs of our modern life, the predominance ought not now to pass from letters to science; and naturally the question is nowhere raised with more energy than here in the United States. The design of abasing what is called "mere literary instruction and education,"

¹*Republic*, VI, 495.

²*Theatetus*, 172-173.

³In his essay entitled *Literary Ethics*. Emerson's word is "majesty," not "majority."

⁴*Republic*, IX, 591.

and of exalting what is called "sound, extensive, and practical scientific knowledge," is, in this intensely modern world of the United States, even more perhaps than in Europe, a very popular design, and makes great and rapid progress.

I am going to ask whether the present movement for ousting letters from their old predominance in education, and for transferring the predominance in education to the natural sciences, whether this brisk and flourishing movement ought to prevail, and whether it is likely that in the end it really will prevail. An objection may be raised which I will anticipate. My own studies have been almost wholly in letters, and my visits to the field of the natural sciences have been very slight and inadequate, although those sciences have always strongly moved my curiosity. A man of letters, it will perhaps be said, is not competent to discuss the comparative merits of letters and natural science as means of education. To this objection I reply, first of all, that his incompetence, if he attempts the discussion but is really incompetent for it, will be abundantly visible; nobody will be taken in; he will have plenty of sharp observers and critics to save mankind from that danger. But the line I am going to follow is, as you will soon discover, so extremely simple, that perhaps it may be followed without failure even by one who for a more ambitious line of discussion would be quite incompetent.

Some of you may possibly remember a phrase of mine which has been the object of a good deal of comment; an observation to the effect that in our culture, the aim being to *know ourselves and the world*, we have, as the means to this end, to *know the best which has been thought and said in the world*. A man of science, who is also an excellent writer and the very prince of debaters, Professor Huxley, in a discourse at the opening of Sir Josiah Mason's college at Birmingham, laying hold of this phrase, expanded it by quoting some more words of mine, which are these:

The civilized world is to be regarded as now being, for intellectual and spiritual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result; and whose members have for their proper outfit a knowledge of Greek, Roman, and Eastern antiquity, and of one another. Special local and temporary advantages being put out of account, that modern nation will in the intellectual and spiritual sphere make most progress, which most thoroughly carries out this programme.²

Now on my phrase, thus enlarged, Professor Huxley remarks that when I speak of the above-mentioned knowledge as enabling us to know ourselves and the world, I assert *literature* to contain the materials which suffice for thus making us know ourselves and the world. But it is not by any means clear, says he, that after having learned all which ancient and modern literatures have to tell us, we have laid a sufficiently broad and deep foundation for that criticism of life, that knowledge of ourselves and the world, which constitutes culture. On the contrary, Professor Huxley declares that he finds himself "wholly unable to admit that either nations or individuals will really advance, if their outfit draws nothing from the stores of physical science. An army without weapons of precision, and with no particular base of operations, might more hopefully enter upon a campaign on the Rhine, than a man, devoid of a knowledge of what physical science has done in the last century, upon a criticism of life."

This shows how needful it is for those who are to discuss any matter together, to have a common understanding as to the sense of the terms they employ,—how needful, and how difficult. What Professor Huxley says, implies just the reproach which is so often brought against the study of *belles lettres*, as they are called: that the study is an elegant one, but slight and ineffectual; a smattering of Greek and Latin and other ornamental things, of little use for any one whose object is to get at truth, and to be a practical man. So, too, M. Renan talks of the "superficial humanism" of a school-course which treats us as if we were all going to be poets, writers, preachers, orators, and he opposes this humanism to positive

¹These phrases of Sir Josiah Mason's, Arnold takes from Huxley's essay on *Science and Culture*, of which he makes large use in the present discourse. The two essays should be studied in connection with each other.

²From Arnold's essay on *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time*.

science, or the critical search after truth.¹ And there is always a tendency in those who are remonstrating against the predominance of letters in education, to understand by letters *belles lettres*, and by *belles lettres* a superficial humanism, the opposite of science or true knowledge.

But when we talk of knowing Greek and Roman antiquity, for instance, which is the knowledge people have called the humanities, I for my part mean a knowledge which is something more than a superficial humanism, mainly decorative. "I call all teaching *scientific*," says Wolf,² the critic of Homer, "which is systematically laid out and followed up to its original sources. For example: a knowledge of classical antiquity is scientific when the remains of classical antiquity are correctly studied in the original languages." There can be no doubt that Wolf is perfectly right; that all learning is scientific which is systematically laid out and followed up to its original sources, and that a genuine humanism is scientific.

When I speak of knowing Greek and Roman antiquity, therefore, as a help to knowing ourselves and the world, I mean more than a knowledge of so much vocabulary, so much grammar, so many portions of authors in the Greek and Latin languages. I mean knowing the Greeks and Romans, and their life and genius, and what they were and did in the world; what we get from them, and what is its value. That, at least, is the ideal; and when we talk of endeavoring to know Greek and Roman antiquity, as a help to knowing ourselves and the world, we mean endeavoring so to know them as to satisfy this ideal, however much we may still fall short of it.

The same also as to knowing our own and other modern nations, with the like aim of getting to understand ourselves and the world. To know the best that has been thought and said by the modern nations, is to know, says Professor Huxley, "only what modern *literatures* have to tell us; it is the criticism of life contained in modern literature." And yet "the distinctive character of our times," he urges, "lies in the vast and

constantly increasing part which is played by natural knowledge." And how, therefore, can a man, devoid of knowledge of what physical science has done in the last century, enter hopefully upon a criticism of modern life?

Let us, I say, be agreed about the meaning of the terms we are using. I talk of knowing the best which has been thought and uttered in the world; Professor Huxley says this means knowing *literature*. Literature is a large word; it may mean everything written with letters or printed in a book. Euclid's *Elements* and Newton's *Principia* are thus literature. All knowledge that reaches us through books is literature. But by literature Professor Huxley means *belles lettres*. He means to make me say, that knowing the best which has been thought and said by the modern nations is knowing their *belles lettres* and no more. And this is no sufficient equipment, he argues, for a criticism of modern life. But as I do not mean, by knowing ancient Rome, knowing merely more or less of Latin *belles lettres*, and taking no account of Rome's military, and political, and legal, and administrative work in the world; and as, by knowing ancient Greece, I understand knowing her as the giver of Greek art, and the guide to a free and right use of reason and to scientific method, and the founder of our mathematics and physics and astronomy and biology,—I understand knowing her as all this, and not merely knowing certain Greek poems, and histories, and treatises, and speeches,—so as to the knowledge of modern nations, also. By knowing modern nations, I mean not merely knowing their *belles lettres*, but knowing also what has been done by such men as Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Darwin. "Our ancestors learned," says Professor Huxley, "that the earth is the center of the visible universe, and that man is the cynosure of things terrestrial; and more especially was it inculcated that the course of nature had no fixed order, but that it could be, and constantly was, altered." But for us now, continues Professor Huxley, "the notions of the beginning and the end of the world entertained by our forefathers are no longer credible. It is very certain that the earth is not the chief body in the material universe, and that the world is not subordinated to

¹In the essay on *L'Instruction supérieure en France*, in his *Questions Contemporaines*.

²Friedrich August Wolf (1759-1824), generally regarded as the founder of scientific classical philology.

man's use. It is even more certain that nature is the expression of a definite order, with which nothing interferes." "And yet," he cries, "the purely classical education advocated by the representatives of the humanists in our day gives no inkling of all this!"

In due place and time I will just touch upon that vexed question of classical education; but at present the question is as to what is meant by knowing the best which modern nations have thought and said. It is not knowing their *belles lettres* merely which is meant. To know Italian *belles lettres* is not to know Italy, and to know English *belles lettres* is not to know England. Into knowing Italy and England there comes a great deal more, Galileo and Newton amongst it. The reproach of being a superficial humanism, a tincture of *belles lettres*, may attach rightly enough to some other disciplines; but to the particular discipline recommended when I proposed knowing the best that has been thought and said in the world, it does not apply. In that best I certainly include what in modern times has been thought and said by the great observers and knowers of nature.

There is, therefore, really no question between Professor Huxley and me as to whether knowing the great results of the modern scientific study of nature is not required as a part of our culture, as well as knowing the products of literature and art. But to follow the processes by which those results are reached, ought, say the friends of physical science, to be made the staple of education for the bulk of mankind. And here there does arise a question between those whom Professor Huxley calls with playful sarcasm "the Levites of culture,"¹ and those whom the poor humanist is sometimes apt to regard as its Nebuchadnezzars.²

The great results of the scientific investigation of nature we are agreed upon knowing, but how much of our study are we bound to give to the processes by which those results are reached? The results have their visible bearing on human life. But all the processes, too, all the items of fact,

by which those results are reached and established, are interesting. All knowledge is interesting to a wise man, and the knowledge of nature is interesting to all men. It is very interesting to know, that, from the albuminous white of the egg, the chick in the egg gets the materials for its flesh, bones, blood, and feathers; while, from the fatty yolk of the egg, it gets the heat and energy which enable it at length to break its shell and begin the world. It is less interesting, perhaps, but still it is interesting, to know that when a taper burns, the wax is converted into carbonic acid and water. Moreover, it is quite true that the habit of dealing with facts, which is given by the study of nature, is, as the friends of physical science praise it for being, an excellent discipline. The appeal, in the study of nature, is constantly to observation and experiment; not only is it said that the thing is so, but we can be made to see that it is so. Not only does a man tell us that when a taper burns the wax is converted into carbonic acid and water, as a man may tell us, if he likes, that Charon is punting his ferry-boat on the river Styx, or that Victor Hugo is a sublime poet, or Mr. Gladstone the most admirable of statesmen; but we are made to see that the conversion into carbonic acid and water does actually happen. This reality of natural knowledge it is, which makes the friends of physical science contrast it, as a knowledge of things, with the humanist's knowledge, which is, say they, a knowledge of words. And hence Professor Huxley is moved to lay it down that, "for the purpose of attaining real culture, an exclusively scientific education is at least as effectual as an exclusively literary education." And a certain President of the Section for Mechanical Science in the British Association is, in Scripture phrase, "very bold," and declares that if a man, in his mental training, "has substituted literature and history for natural science, he has chosen the less useful alternative." But whether we go these lengths or not, we must all admit that in natural science the habit gained of dealing with facts is a most valuable discipline, and that every one should have some experience of it.

More than this, however, is demanded by the reformers. It is proposed to make the

¹See Numbers, iii, 14-32.

²The Babylonian conqueror of Jerusalem. See Daniel, *passim*.

training in natural science the main part of education, for the great majority of mankind at any rate. And here, I confess, I part company with the friends of physical science, with whom up to this point I have been agreeing. In differing from them, however, I wish to proceed with the utmost caution and diffidence. The smallness of my own acquaintance with the disciplines of natural science is ever before my mind, and I am fearful of doing these disciplines an injustice. The ability and pugnacity of the partisans of natural science make them formidable persons to contradict. The tone of tentative inquiry, which befits a being of dim faculties and bounded knowledge, is the tone I would wish to take and not to depart from. At present it seems to me, that those who are for giving to natural knowledge, as they call it, the chief place in the education of the majority of mankind, leave one important thing out of their account: the constitution of human nature. But I put this forward on the strength of some facts not at all recondite, very far from it; facts capable of being stated in the simplest possible fashion, and to which, if I so state them, the man of science will, I am sure, be willing to allow their due weight.

Deny the facts altogether, I think, he hardly can. He can hardly deny, that when we set ourselves to enumerate the powers which go to the building up of human life, and say that they are the power of conduct, the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty, and the power of social life and manners,—he can hardly deny that this scheme, though drawn in rough and plain lines enough, and not pretending to scientific exactness, does yet give a fairly true representation of the matter. Human nature is built up by these powers; we have the need for them all. When we have rightly met and adjusted the claims of them all, we shall then be in a fair way for getting soberness and righteousness, with wisdom. This is evident enough, and the friends of physical science would admit it.

But perhaps they may not have sufficiently observed another thing: namely, that the several powers just mentioned are not isolated, but there is, in the generality of mankind, a perpetual tendency to relate them one to another in divers ways. With

one such way of relating them I am particularly concerned now. Following our instinct for intellect and knowledge, we acquire pieces of knowledge; and presently, in the generality of men, there arises the desire to relate these pieces of knowledge to our sense for conduct, to our sense for beauty,—and there is weariness and dissatisfaction if the desire is balked. Now in this desire lies, I think, the strength of that hold which letters have upon us.

All knowledge is, as I said just now, interesting; and even items of knowledge which from the nature of the case cannot well be related, but must stand isolated in our thoughts, have their interest. Even lists of exceptions have their interest. If we are studying Greek accents, it is interesting to know that *país* and *pas*, and some other monosyllables of the same form of declension, do not take the circumflex upon the last syllable of the genitive plural, but vary, in this respect, from the common rule. If we are studying physiology, it is interesting to know that the pulmonary artery carries dark blood and the pulmonary vein carries bright blood, departing in this respect from the common rule for the division of labor between the veins and the arteries. But everyone knows how we seek naturally to combine the pieces of our knowledge together, to bring them under general rules, to relate them to principles; and how unsatisfactory and tiresome it would be to go on for ever learning lists of exceptions, or accumulating items of fact which must stand isolated.

Well, that same need of relating our knowledge, which operates here within the sphere of our knowledge itself, we shall find operating, also, outside that sphere. We experience, as we go on learning and knowing,—the vast majority of us experience,—the need of relating what we have learned and known to the sense which we have in us for conduct, to the sense which we have in us for beauty.

A certain Greek prophetess of Mantinea in Arcadia, Diotima by name, once explained to the philosopher Socrates that love, and impulse, and bent of all kinds, is, in fact, nothing else but the desire in men that good should for ever be present to them. This desire for good, Diotima assured Socrates, is

our fundamental desire, of which fundamental desire every impulse in us is only some one particular form.¹ And therefore this fundamental desire it is, I suppose,—this desire in men that good should be for ever present to them,—which acts in us when we feel the impulse for relating our knowledge to our sense for conduct and to our sense for beauty. At any rate, with men in general the instinct exists. Such is human nature. And the instinct, it will be admitted, is innocent, and human nature is preserved by our following the lead of its innocent instincts. Therefore, in seeking to gratify this instinct in question, we are following the instinct of self-preservation in humanity.

But, no doubt, some kinds of knowledge cannot be made to directly serve the instinct in question, cannot be directly related to the sense for beauty, to the sense for conduct. These are instrument-knowledges; they lead on to other knowledges, which can. A man who passes his life in instrument-knowledges is a specialist. They may be invaluable as instruments to something beyond, for those who have the gift thus to employ them; and they may be disciplines in themselves wherein it is useful for everyone to have some schooling. But it is inconceivable that the generality of men should pass all their mental life with Greek accents or with formal logic. My friend Professor Sylvester,² who is one of the first mathematicians in the world, holds transcendental doctrines as to the virtue of mathematics, but those doctrines are not for common men. In the very Senate House and heart of our English Cambridge³ I once ventured, though not without an apology for my profaneness, to hazard the opinion that for the majority of mankind a little of mathematics, even, goes a long way. Of course this is quite consistent with their being of immense importance as an instrument to something else; but it is the few who have the aptitude for thus using them, not the bulk of mankind.

¹Plato, *Symposium*, 201-212.

²James Joseph Sylvester (1814-1897), English mathematician, professor at Johns Hopkins University and later at Oxford.

³Where the study of mathematics has long been held in high esteem.

The natural sciences do not, however, stand on the same footing with these instrument-knowledges. Experience shows us that the generality of men will find more interest in learning that, when a taper burns, the wax is converted into carbonic acid and water, or in learning the explanation of the phenomenon of dew, or in learning how the circulation of the blood is carried on, than they find in learning that the genitive plural of *pais* and *pas* does not take the circumflex on the termination. And one piece of natural knowledge is added to another, and others are added to that, and at last we come to propositions so interesting as Mr. Darwin's famous proposition that "our ancestor was a hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in his habits."⁴ Or we come to propositions of such reach and magnitude as those which Professor Huxley delivers, when he says that the notions of our forefathers about the beginning and the end of the world were all wrong, and that nature is the expression of a definite order with which nothing interferes.

Interesting, indeed, these results of science are, important they are, and we should all of us be acquainted with them. But what I now wish you to mark is, that we are still, when they are propounded to us and we receive them, we are still in the sphere of intellect and knowledge. And for the generality of men there will be found, I say, to arise, when they have duly taken in the proposition that their ancestor was "a hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in his habits," there will be found to arise an invincible desire to relate this proposition to the sense in us for conduct, and to the sense in us for beauty. But this the men of science will not do for us, and will hardly even profess to do. They will give us other pieces of knowledge, other facts, about other animals and their ancestors, or about plants, or about stones, or about stars; and they may finally bring us to those great "general conceptions of the universe, which are forced upon us all," says Professor Huxley, "by the progress of physical science." But still it will be *knowledge* only which they give us; knowl-

⁴*The Descent of Man*, pt. IV, chap. 21.

edge not put for us into relation with our sense for conduct, our sense for beauty, and touched with emotion by being so put; not thus put for us, and therefore, to the majority of mankind, after a certain while, unsatisfying, wearying.

Not to the born naturalist, I admit. But what do we mean by a born naturalist? We mean a man in whom the zeal for observing nature is so uncommonly strong and eminent, that it marks him off from the bulk of mankind. Such a man will pass his life happily in collecting natural knowledge and reasoning upon it, and will ask for nothing, or hardly anything, more. I have heard it said, that the sagacious and admirable naturalist whom we lost not very long ago, Mr. Darwin, once owned to a friend that for his part he did not experience the necessity for two things which most men find so necessary to them,—religion and poetry; science and the domestic affections, he thought, were enough. To a born naturalist, I can well understand that this should seem so. So absorbing is his occupation with nature, so strong his love for his occupation, that he goes on acquiring natural knowledge and reasoning upon it, and has little time or inclination for thinking about getting it related to the desire in man for conduct, the desire in man for beauty. He relates it to them for himself as he goes along, so far as he feels the need; and he draws from the domestic affections all the additional solace necessary. But then Darwins are extremely rare. Another great and admirable master of natural knowledge, Faraday,¹ was a Sandemanian. That is to say, he related his knowledge to his instinct for conduct and to his instinct for beauty, by the aid of that respectable Scottish sectary, Robert Sandeman.² And so strong, in general, is the demand of religion and poetry to have their share in a man, to associate themselves with his knowing, and to relieve and rejoice it, that probably, for one man amongst us with the disposition to do as Darwin did in this respect, there are at least fifty with the disposition to do as Faraday.

Education lays hold upon us, in fact, by satisfying this demand. Professor Huxley holds up to scorn medieval education, with its neglect of the knowledge of nature, its poverty even of literary studies, its formal logic devoted to "showing how and why that which the Church said was true must be true." But the great medieval universities were not brought into being, we may be sure, by the zeal for giving a jejune and contemptible education. Kings have been their nursing fathers, and queens have been their nursing mothers, but not for this. The medieval universities came into being, because the supposed knowledge, delivered by Scripture and the Church, so deeply engaged men's hearts, by so simply, easily, and powerfully relating itself to their desire for conduct, their desire for beauty. All other knowledge was dominated by this supposed knowledge and was subordinated to it, because of the surpassing strength of the hold which it gained upon the affections of men, by allying itself profoundly with their sense for conduct, their sense for beauty.

But now, says Professor Huxley, conceptions of the universe fatal to the notions held by our forefathers have been forced upon us by physical science. Grant to him that they are thus fatal, that the new conceptions must and will soon become current everywhere, and that everyone will finally perceive them to be fatal to the beliefs of our forefathers. The need of humane letters, as they are truly called, because they serve the paramount desire in men that good should be for ever present to them,—the need of humane letters, to establish a relation between the new conceptions, and our instinct for beauty, our instinct for conduct, is only the more visible. The Middle Age could do without humane letters, as it could do without the study of nature, because its supposed knowledge was made to engage its emotions so powerfully. Grant that the supposed knowledge disappears, its power of being made to engage the emotions will of course disappear along with it,—but the emotions themselves, and their claim to be engaged and satisfied, will remain. Now if we find by experience that humane letters have an undeniable power of engaging the emotions, the importance of

¹Michael Faraday (1791–1867), physicist and chemist.

²He was born at Perth in 1718 and died at Danbury, Connecticut, in 1771. With his father-in-law, John Glas, he founded a communistic religious sect.

humane letters in a man's training becomes not less, but greater, in proportion to the success of modern science in extirpating what it calls "medieval thinking."

Have humane letters, then, have poetry and eloquence, the power here attributed to them of engaging the emotions, and do they exercise it? And if they have it and exercise it, *how* do they exercise it, so as to exert an influence upon man's sense for conduct, his sense for beauty? Finally, even if they both can and do exert an influence upon the senses in question, how are they to relate to them the results,—the modern results,—of natural science? All these questions may be asked. First, have poetry and eloquence the power of calling out the emotions? The appeal is to experience. Experience shows that for the vast majority of men, for mankind in general, they have the power. Next, do they exercise it? They do. But then, *how* do they exercise it so as to affect man's sense for conduct, his sense for beauty? And this is perhaps a case for applying the Preacher's words: "Though a man labor to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea, farther, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it."¹ Why should it be one thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say, "Patience is a virtue," and quite another thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say with Homer,

τλητὸν γὰρ Μοῖραι θυμὸν θέσαν
ἀνθρώποισιν—²

"for an enduring heart have the destinies appointed to the children of men"? Why should it be one thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say with the philosopher Spinoza, *Felicitas in eo consistit quod homo suum esse conservare potest*—"Man's happiness consists in his being able to preserve his own essence,"³ and quite another thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say with the Gospel, "What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, forfeit himself?"⁴ How does this difference of effect arise? I cannot tell, and I am not

much concerned to know; the important thing is that it does arise, and that we can profit by it. But how, finally, are poetry and eloquence to exercise the power of relating the modern results of natural science to man's instinct for conduct, his instinct for beauty? And here again I answer that I do not know *how* they will exercise it, but that they can and will exercise it I am sure. I do not mean that modern philosophical poets and modern philosophical moralists are to come and relate for us, in express terms, the results of modern scientific research to our instinct for conduct, our instinct for beauty. But I mean that we shall find, as a matter of experience, if we know the best that has been thought and uttered in the world, we shall find that the art and poetry and eloquence of men who lived, perhaps, long ago, who had the most limited natural knowledge, who had the most erroneous conceptions about many important matters, we shall find that this art, and poetry, and eloquence, have in fact not only the power of refreshing and delighting us, they have also the power,—such is the strength and worth, in essentials, of their authors' criticism of life,—they have a fortifying, and elevating, and quickening, and suggestive power, capable of wonderfully helping us to relate the results of modern science to our need for conduct, our need for beauty. Homer's conceptions of the physical universe were, I imagine, grotesque; but really, under the shock of hearing from modern science that "the world is not subordinated to man's use, and that man is not the cynosure of things terrestrial," I could, for my own part, desire no better comfort than Homer's line which I quoted just now,

τλητὸν γὰρ Μοῖραι θυμὸν θέσαν
ἀνθρώποισιν—

"for an enduring heart have the destinies appointed to the children of men"!

And the more that men's minds are cleared, the more that the results of science are frankly accepted, the more that poetry and eloquence come to be received and studied as what in truth they really are,—the criticism of life by gifted men, alive and active with extraordinary power at an unusual number of points;—so much the

¹Ecclesiastes, viii, 17 (Arnold's note).

²*Iliad*, XXIV, 49 (Arnold's note).

³*Ethics*, IV, xviii, scholium.

⁴St. Luke. ix, 25,

more will the value of humane letters, and of art also, which is an utterance having a like kind of power with theirs, be felt and acknowledged, and their place in education be secured.

Let us therefore, all of us, avoid indeed as much as possible any invidious comparison between the merits of humane letters, as means of education, and the merits of the natural sciences. But when some President of a Section for Mechanical Science insists on making the comparison, and tells us that "he who in his training has substituted literature and history for natural science has chosen the less useful alternative," let us make answer to him that the student of humane letters only, will, at least, know also the great general conceptions brought in by modern physical science; for science, as Professor Huxley says, forces them upon us all. But the student of the natural sciences only, will, by our very hypothesis, know nothing of humane letters; not to mention that in setting himself to be perpetually accumulating natural knowledge, he sets himself to do what only specialists have in general the gift for doing genially. And so he will probably be unsatisfied, or at any rate incomplete, and even more incomplete than the student of humane letters only.

I once mentioned in a school-report, how a young man in one of our English training colleges having to paraphrase the passage in *Macbeth* beginning,

"Can'st thou not minister to a mind diseased?"

turned this line into, "Can you not wait upon the lunatic?" And I remarked what a curious state of things it would be, if every pupil of our national schools knew, let us say, that the moon is two thousand one hundred and sixty miles in diameter, and thought at the same time that a good paraphrase for

"Can'st thou not minister to a mind diseased?"

was, "Can you not wait upon the lunatic?" If one is driven to choose, I think I would rather have a young person ignorant about the moon's diameter, but aware that "Can you not wait upon the lunatic?" is bad, than a young person whose education had

been such as to manage things the other way.

Or to go higher than the pupils of our national schools. I have in my mind's eye a member of our British Parliament who comes to travel here in America, who afterwards relates his travels, and who shows a really masterly knowledge of the geology of this great country and of its mining capabilities, but who ends by gravely suggesting that the United States should borrow a prince from our Royal Family, and should make him their king, and should create a House of Lords of great landed proprietors after the pattern of ours; and then America, he thinks, would have her future happily and perfectly secured. Surely, in this case, the President of the Section for Mechanical Science would himself hardly say that our member of Parliament, by concentrating himself upon geology and mineralogy, and so on, and not attending to literature and history, had "chosen the more useful alternative."

If then there is to be separation and option between humane letters on the one hand, and the natural sciences on the other, the great majority of mankind, all who have not exceptional and overpowering aptitudes for the study of nature, would do well, I cannot but think, to choose to be educated in humane letters rather than in the natural sciences. Letters will call out their being at more points, will make them live more.

I said that before I ended I would just touch on the question of classical education, and I will keep my word. Even if literature is to retain a large place in our education, yet Latin and Greek, say the friends of progress, will certainly have to go. Greek is the grand offender in the eyes of these gentlemen. The attackers of the established course of study think that against Greek, at any rate, they have irresistible arguments. Literature may perhaps be needed in education, they say; but why on earth should it be Greek literature? Why not French or German? Nay, "has not an Englishman models in his own literature of every kind of excellence?" As before, it is not on any weak pleadings of my own that I rely for convincing the gainsayers; it is on the constitution of human nature itself, and on the instinct of self-preservation

in humanity. The instinct for beauty is set in human nature, as surely as the instinct for knowledge is set there, or the instinct for conduct. If the instinct for beauty is served by Greek literature and art as it is served by no other literature and art, we may trust to the instinct of self-preservation in humanity for keeping Greek as part of our culture. We may trust to it for even making the study of Greek more prevalent than it is now. Greek will come, I hope, some day to be studied more rationally than at present; but it will be increasingly studied as men increasingly feel the need in them for beauty, and how powerfully Greek art and Greek literature can serve this need. Women will again study Greek, as Lady Jane Grey did; I believe that in that chain of forts, with which the fair host of the Amazons are now engirdling our English universities, I find that here in America, in colleges like Smith College in Massachusetts, and Vassar College in the State of New York, and in the happy families of the mixed universities out West, they are studying it already.

Defuit una mihi symmetria prisca,—"The antique symmetry was the one thing wanting to me," said Leonardo da Vinci; and he was an Italian. I will not presume to speak for the Americans, but I am sure that, in the Englishman, the want of this admirable symmetry of the Greeks is a thousand times more great and crying than in any Italian. The results of the want show themselves most glaringly, perhaps, in our architecture, but they show themselves, also, in all our art. *Fit details strictly combined, in view of a large general result nobly conceived*; that is just the beautiful *symmetria prisca* of the Greeks, and it is just where we English fail, where all our art fails. Striking ideas we have, and well-executed details we have; but that high symmetry which, with satisfying and delightful effect, combines them, we seldom or never have. The glorious beauty of the Acropolis at Athens did not come from single fine things stuck about on that hill, a statue here, a gateway there;—no, it arose from all things being perfectly combined for a supreme total effect. What must not an Englishman feel about our deficiencies in this respect, as the sense for beauty, whereof this symmetry is an essential element,

awakens and strengthens within him! what will not one day be his respect and desire for Greece and its *symmetria prisca*, when the scales drop from his eyes as he walks the London streets, and he sees such a lesson in meanness as the Strand, for instance, in its true deformity! But here we are coming to our friend Mr. Ruskin's province, and I will not intrude upon it, for he is its very sufficient guardian.

And so we at last find, it seems, we find flowing in favor of the humanities the natural and necessary stream of things, which seemed against them when we started. The "hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in his habits," this good fellow carried hidden in his nature, apparently, something destined to develop into a necessity for humane letters. Nay, more; we seem finally to be even led to the further conclusion that our hairy ancestor carried in his nature, also, a necessity for Greek.

And therefore, to say the truth, I cannot really think that humane letters are in much actual danger of being thrust out from their leading place in education, in spite of the array of authorities against them at this moment. So long as human nature is what it is, their attractions will remain irresistible. As with Greek, so with letters generally: they will some day come, we may hope, to be studied more rationally, but they will not lose their place. What will happen will rather be that there will be crowded into education other matters besides, far too many; there will be, perhaps, a period of unsettlement and confusion and false tendency; but letters will not in the end lose their leading place. If they lose it for a time, they will get it back again. We shall be brought back to them by our wants and aspirations. And a poor humanist may possess his soul in patience, neither strive nor cry, admit the energy and brilliancy of the partisans of physical science, and their present favor with the public, to be far greater than his own, and still have a happy faith that the nature of things works silently on behalf of the studies which he loves, and that, while we shall all have to acquaint ourselves with the great results reached by modern science, and to give ourselves as much training in its disciplines as we can

conveniently carry, yet the majority of men will always require humane letters; and so much the more, as they have the more and the greater results of science to relate to the need in man for conduct, and to the need in him for beauty.

TO A FRIEND¹

Who prop, thou ask'st, in these bad days,
my mind?—

He² much, the old man, who, clearest-souled
of men,

Saw The Wide Prospect,³ and the Asian Fen,
And Tmolus hill,⁴ and Smyrna bay, though
blind.

Much he,⁵ whose friendship I not long since
won,

That halting slave, who in Nicopolis
Taught Arrian, when Vespasian's brutal son⁶
Cleared Rome of what most shamed him.

But be his⁷

My special thanks, whose even-balanced soul
From first youth tested up to extreme old
age,

Business could not make dull, nor passion
wild;

Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole;
The mellow glory of the Attic stage,
Singer of sweet Colonus, and its child.⁸

SHAKESPEARE

Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask—Thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill,
Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,

¹Published, as were also the two following sonnets, in 1849.

²Homer.

³Europe (*Εὐρώπη*, *the wide prospect*) probably describes the appearance of the European coast to the Greeks on the coast of Asia Minor opposite. The name Asia, again, comes, it has been thought, from the muddy fens of the rivers of Asia Minor such as the Cayster or Mæander, which struck the imagination of the Greeks living near them (Arnold's note).

⁴A mountain range near Smyrna, which is one of the cities that claimed to be Homer's birthplace.

⁵Epictetus.

⁶Domitian, who banished the philosophers from Rome in A.D. 89.

⁷Sophocles.

⁸He was born at Colonus, which he described in his tragedy (*Edipus at Colonus*).

Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-
place,

Spares but the cloudy border of his base
To the foiled searching of mortality;
And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams
know,

Self-schooled, self-scanned, self-honored, self-
secure,

Didst walk on earth unguessed at.—Better
so!

All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which
bow,

Find their sole speech in that victorious brow.

IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

TO A PREACHER

"IN HARMONY with Nature?" Restless fool,
Who with such heat dost preach what were
to thee,

When true, the last impossibility—
To be like Nature strong, like Nature cool!
Know, man hath all which Nature hath, but
more,

And in that *more* lie all his hopes of good.
Nature is cruel, man is sick of blood;
Nature is stubborn, man would fain adore;
Nature is fickle, man hath need of rest;
Nature forgives no debt, and fears no grave;
Man would be mild, and with safe conscience
blest.

Man must begin, know this, where Nature
ends;

Nature and man can never be fast friends.
Fool, if thou canst not pass her, rest her
slave!

REQUIESCAT⁹

STREW on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew!
In quiet she reposes:
Ah, would that I did too!

Her mirth the world required;
She bathed it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
And now they let her be.

⁹Published in 1853.

Her life was turning, turning,
 In mazes of heat and sound.
 But for peace her soul was yearning,
 And now peace laps her round.

Her cabined, ample spirit,
 It fluttered and failed for breath.
 To-night it doth inherit
 The vasty hall of death.

RESIGNATION¹

TO FAUSTA

"To DIE be given us, or attain!
 Fierce work it were, to do again."
 So pilgrims, bound for Mecca, prayed
 At burning noon; so warriors said,
 Scarfed with the cross, who watched the
 miles
 Of dust which wreathed their struggling files
 Down Lydian mountains; so, when snows
 Round Alpine summits, eddying, rose,
 The Goth, bound Rome-wards; so the Hun,
 Crouched on his saddle, while the sun
 Went lurid down o'er flooded plains
 Through which the groaning Danube strains
 To the drear Euxine;—so pray all,
 Whom labors, self-ordained, enthrall;
 Because they to themselves propose
 On this side the all-common close
 A goal which, gained, may give repose.
 So pray they; and to stand again
 Where they stood once, to them were pain;
 Pain to thread back and to renew
 Past straits, and currents long steered
 through.

But milder natures, and more free—
 Whom an unblamed serenity
 Hath freed from passions, and the state
 Of struggle these necessitate;
 Whom schooling of the stubborn mind
 Hath made, or birth hath found, resigned—
 These mourn not, that their goings pay
 Obedience to the passing day.
 These claim not every laughing Hour
 For handmaid to their striding power;
 Each in her turn, with torch upreared,
 To await their march; and when appeared,
 Through the cold gloom, with measured race,
 To usher for a destined space

(Her own sweet errands all forgone)
 The too imperious traveler on.
 These, Fausta, ask not this; nor thou,
 Time's chafing prisoner, ask it now!

We left, just ten years since, you say,
 That wayside inn we left to-day.²
 Our jovial host, as forth we fare,
 Shouts greeting from his easy chair.
 High on a bank our leader stands,
 Reviews and ranks his motley bands,
 Makes clear our goal to every eye—
 The valley's western boundary.
 A gate swings to! our tide hath flowed
 Already from the silent road.
 The valley-pastures, one by one,
 Are threaded, quiet in the sun;
 And now beyond the rude stone bridge
 Slopes gracious up the western ridge.
 Its woody border, and the last
 Of its dark upland farms is past—
 Cool farms, with open-lying stores,
 Under their burnished sycamores;
 All past! and through the trees we glide,
 Emerging on the green hill-side.
 There climbing hangs, a far-seen sign,
 Our wavering, many-colored line;
 There winds, upstreaming slowly still
 Over the summit of the hill.
 And now, in front, behold outspread
 Those upper regions we must tread!
 Mild hollows, and clear heathy swells,
 The cheerful silence of the fells.
 Some two hours' march with serious air,
 Through the deep noontide heats we fare;
 The red-grouse, springing at our sound,
 Skims, now and then, the shining ground;
 No life, save his and ours, intrudes
 Upon these breathless solitudes.
 O joy! again the farms appear.
 Cool shade is there, and rustic cheer;
 There springs the brook will guide us down,
 Bright comrade, to the noisy town.
 Linger, we follow down; we gain
 The town, the highway, and the plain.
 And many a mile of dusty way,
 Parched and road-worn, we made that day;

²Those who have been long familiar with the English Lake Country will find no difficulty in recalling, from the description in the text, the roadside inn at Wythburn on the descent from Dunmail Raise towards Keswick; its sedentary landlord of thirty years ago, and the passage over the Wythburn Fells to Watendlath (Arnold's note).

But, Fausta, I remember well,
That as the balmy darkness fell
We bathed our hands with speechless glee,
That night, in the wide-glimmering sea.

Once more we tread this self-same road,
Fausta, which ten years since we trod;
Alone we tread it, you and I,
Ghosts of that boisterous company.
Here, where the brook shines, near its head,
In its clear, shallow, turf-fringed bed;
Here, whence the eye first sees, far down,
Capped with faint smoke, the noisy town;
Here sit we, and again unroll,
Though slowly, the familiar whole.
The solemn wastes of heathy hill
Sleep in the July sunshine still;
The self-same shadows now, as then,
Play through this grassy upland glen;
The loose dark stones on the green way
Lie strewn, it seems, where then they lay;
On this mild bank above the stream,
(You crush them!) the blue gentians gleam.
Still this wild brook, the rushes cool,
The sailing foam, the shining pool!
These are not changed; and we, you say,
Are scarce more changed, in truth, than they.

The gypsies, whom we met below,
They, too, have long roamed to and fro;
They ramble, leaving, where they pass,
Their fragments on the cumbered grass.
And often to some kindly place
Chance guides the migratory race,
Where, though long wanderings intervene,
They recognize a former scene.
The dingy tents are pitched; the fires
Give to the wind their wavering spires;
In dark knots crouch round the wild flame
Their children, as when first they came;
They see their shackled beasts again
Move, browsing, up the gray-walled lane.
Signs are not wanting, which might raise
The ghost in them of former days—
Signs are not wanting, if they would;
Suggestions to disquietude.
For them, for all, time's busy touch,
While it mends little, troubles much.
Their joints grow stiffer—but the year
Runs his old round of dubious cheer;
Chilly they grow—yet winds in March,
Still, sharp as ever, freeze and parch;
They must live still—and yet, God knows,
Crowded and keen the country grows;

It seems as if, in their decay,
The law grew stronger every day.
So might they reason, so compare,
Fausta, times past with times that are.
But no!—they rubbed through yesterday
In their hereditary way,
And they will rub through, if they can,
To-morrow on the self-same plan,
Till death arrive to supersede,
For them, vicissitude and need.

The poet, to whose mighty heart
Heaven doth a quicker pulse impart,
Subdues that energy to scan
Not his own course, but that of man.
Though he move mountains, though his day
Be passed on the proud heights of sway,
Though he hath loosed a thousand chains,
Though he hath borne immortal pains,
Action and suffering though he know—
He hath not lived, if he lives so.
He sees, in some great-historied land,
A ruler of the people stand,
Sees his strong thought in fiery flood
Roll through the heaving multitude,
Exults—yet for no moment's space
Envies the all-regarded place.
Beautiful eyes meet his—and he
Bears to admire uncravingly;
They pass—he, mingled with the crowd,
Is in their far-off triumphs proud.
From some high station he looks down,
At sunset, on a populous town;
Surveys each happy group, which fleets,
Toil ended, through the shining streets,
Each with some errand of its own—
And does not say, "I am alone."
He sees the gentle stir of birth
When morning purifies the earth;
He leans upon a gate and sees
The pastures, and the quiet trees.
Low woody hill, with gracious bound,
Folds the still valley almost round;
The cuckoo, loud on some high lawn,
Is answered from the depth of dawn;
In the hedge straggling to the stream,
Pale, dew-drenched, half-shut roses gleam;
But, where the farther side slopes down,
He sees the drowsy new-waked clown
In his white quaint-embroidered frock
Make, whistling, towards his mist-wreathed
flock—
Slowly, behind the heavy tread,
The wet, flowered grass heaves up its head.

Leaned on his gate, he gazes—tears
Are in his eyes, and in his ears
The murmur of a thousand years.
Before him he sees life unroll,
A placid and continuous whole—
That general life, which does not cease,
Whose secret is not joy, but peace;
That life, whose dumb wish is not missed
If birth proceeds, if things subsist;
The life of plants, and stones, and rain,
The life he craves—if not in vain
Fate gave, what chance shall not control,
His sad lucidity of soul.

You listen—but that wandering smile,
Fausta, betrays you cold the while!
Your eyes pursue the bells of foam
Washed, eddying, from this bank, their home.
“Those gypsies,” so your thoughts I scan,
“Are less, the poet more, than man.
They feel not, though they move and see;
Deeply the poet feels; but he
Breathes, when he will, immortal air,
Where Orpheus and where Homer are.
In the day’s life, whose iron round
Hems us all in, he is not bound;
He leaves his kind, o’erleaps their pen,
And flees the common life of men.
He escapes thence, but we abide—
Not deep the poet sees, but wide.”

The world in which we live and move
Outlasts aversion, outlasts love,
Outlasts each effort, interest, hope,
Remorse, grief, joy;—and were the scope
Of these affections wider made,
Man still would see, and see dismayed,
Beyond his passion’s widest range,
Far regions of eternal change.
Nay, and since death, which wipes out man,
Finds him with many an unsolved plan,
With much unknown, and much untried,
Wonder not dead, and thirst not dried,
Still gazing on the ever full
Eternal mundane spectacle—
This world in which we draw our breath,
In some sense, Fausta, outlasts death.

Blame thou not, therefore, him who dares
Judge vain beforehand human cares;
Whose natural insight can discern
What through experience others learn;
Who needs not love and power, to know
Love transient, power an unreal show;

Who treads at ease life’s uncheered ways—
Him blame not, Fausta, rather praise!
Rather thyself for some aim pray
Nobler than this, to fill the day;
Rather that heart, which burns in thee,
Ask, not to amuse, but to set free;
Be passionate hopes not ill resigned
For quiet, and a fearless mind.
And though fate grudge to thee and me
The poet’s rapt security,
Yet they, believe me, who await
No gifts from chance, have conquered fate;
They, winning room to see and hear,
And to men’s business not too near,
Through clouds of individual strife
Draw homeward to the general life.
Like leaves by suns not yet uncurled;
To the wise, foolish; to the world,
Weak;—yet not weak, I might reply,
Not foolish, Fausta, in His eye,
To whom each moment in its race,
Crowd as we will its neutral space,
Is but a quiet watershed
Whence, equally, the seas of life and death
are fed.

Enough, we live!—and if a life,
With large results so little rife,
Though bearable, seem hardly worth
This pomp of worlds, this pain of birth;
Yet, Fausta, the mute turf we tread,
The solemn hills around us spread,
This stream which falls incessantly,
The strange-sprawled rocks, the lonely sky,
If I might lend their life a voice,
Seem to bear rather than rejoice.
And even could the intemperate prayer
Man iterates, while these forbear,
For movement, for an ampler sphere,
Pierce Fate’s impenetrable ear;
Not milder is the general lot
Because our spirits have forgot,
In action’s dizzying eddy whirled,
The something that infects the world.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN¹

COME, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below!
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow;

¹Published in 1849

Now the wild white horses play,
 Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
 Children dear, let us away!
 This way, this way!

Call her once before you go—
 Call once yet!
 In a voice that she will know:
 "Margaret! Margaret!"
 Children's voices should be dear
 (Call once more) to a mother's ear;
 Children's voices, wild with pain—
 Surely she will come again!
 Call her once and come away;
 This way, this way!
 "Mother dear, we cannot stay!
 The wild white horses foam and fret."
 Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down;
 Call no more!
 One last look at the white-walled town,
 And the little gray church on the windy
 shore;
 Then come down!
 She will not come though you call all day;
 Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday
 We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
 In the caverns where we lay,
 Through the surf and through the swell,
 The far-off sound of a silver bell?
 Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
 Where the winds are all asleep;
 Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
 Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
 Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
 Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
 Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
 Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
 Where great whales come sailing by,
 Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
 Round the world for ever and aye?
 When did music come this way?
 Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
 (Call yet once) that she went away?
 Once she sat with you and me,
 On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
 And the youngest sat on her knee.
 She combed its bright hair, and she tended
 it well,
 When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.

She sighed, she looked up through the clear
 green sea;
 She said: "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
 In the little gray church on the shore to-day.
 'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me!
 And I lose my poor soul, Merman! here with
 thee."

I said: "Go up, dear heart, through the
 waves;
 Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind
 sea-caves!"
 She smiled, she went up through the surf
 in the bay.

Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
 "The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan;
 Long prayers," I said, "in the world they
 say;
 Come!" I said; and we rose through the surf
 in the bay.

We went up the beach, by the sandy down
 Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-
 walled town;

Through the narrow paved streets, where all
 was still,

To the little gray church on the windy hill.
 From the church came a murmur of folk at
 their prayers,

But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
 We climbed on the graves, on the stones
 worn with rains,

And we gazed up the aisle through the small
 leaded panes.

She sat by the pillar; we saw her clear:
 "Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here!
 Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone;
 The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."
 But, ah, she gave me never a look,
 For her eyes were sealed to the holy book!
 Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.
 Come away, children, call no more!
 Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down!
 Down to the depths of the sea!
 She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
 Singing most joyfully.
 Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,
 For the humming street, and the child with
 its toy!
 For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well;
 For the wheel where I spun,
 And the blessed light of the sun!"

And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle falls from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the
sand,
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh;
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mer-
maiden
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away children;
Come children, come down!
The hoarse wind blows coldly;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing: "Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she!
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starred with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanched sands a gloom;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town;
At the church on the hill-side—
And then come back down.
Singing: "There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she!
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea."

SWITZERLAND¹

1. MEETING

AGAIN I see my bliss at hand,
The town, the lake are here;
My Marguerite smiles upon the strand,
Unaltered with the year.

I know that graceful figure fair,
That cheek of languid hue;
I know that soft, enkerchiefed hair,
And those sweet eyes of blue.

Again I spring to make my choice;
Again in tones of ire
I hear a God's tremendous voice:
"Be counseled, and retire."

Ye guiding Powers who join and part,
What would ye have with me?
Ah, warn some more ambitious heart,
And let the peaceful be!

2. PARTING

YE storm-winds of Autumn!
Who rush by, who shake
The window, and ruffle
The gleam-lighted lake;
Who cross to the hill-side
Thin-sprinkled with farms,
Where the high woods strip sadly
Their yellowing arms—
Ye are bound for the mountains!
Ah! with you let me go
Where your cold, distant barrier,
The vast range of snow,
Through the loose clouds lifts dimly
Its white peaks in air—
How deep is their stillness!
Ah, would I were there!

But on the stairs what voice is this I hear,
Buoyant as morning, and as morning clear?
Say, has some wet bird-haunted English lawn
Lent it the music of its trees at dawn?

¹The general title was given to this group of poems in 1853, though some of them were published in 1852. The third poem was published in 1869, the fourth in 1857, and the seventh in 1867, though it was not made a member of this group until 1869. A final change in arrangement brought the group to its present form in 1885.

Or was it from some sun-flecked mountain-
brook
That the sweet voice its upland clearness
took?

Ah! it comes nearer—
Sweet notes, this way!

Hark! fast by the window
The rushing winds go,
To the ice-cumbered gorges,
The vast seas of snow!
There the torrents drive upward
Their rock-strangled hum;
There the avalanche thunders
The hoarse torrent dumb.
—I come, O ye mountains!
Ye torrents, I come!

But who is this, by the half-opened door,
Whose figure casts a shadow on the floor?
The sweet blue eyes—the soft, ash-colored
hair—
The cheeks that still their gentle paleness
wear—
The lovely lips, with their arch smile that
tells
The unconquered joy in which her spirit
dwells—

Ah! they bend nearer—
Sweet lips, this way!

Hark! The wind rushes past us!
Ah! with that let me go
To the clear, waning hill-side,
Unspotted by snow,
There to watch, o'er the sunk vale,
The frore mountain-wall,
Where the niched snow-bed sprays down
Its powdery fall.
There its dusky blue clusters
The aconite spreads;
There the pines slope, the cloud-strips
Hung soft in their heads.
No life but, at moments,
The mountain-bee's hum.
—I come, O ye mountains!
Ye pine-woods, I come!

Forgive me! forgive me!
Ah, Marguerite, fain
Would these arms reach to clasp thee!
But see! 'tis in vain.

In the void air, towards thee,
My stretched arms are cast;
But a sea rolls between us—
Our different past!

To the lips, ah! of others
Those lips have been pressed,
And others, ere I was,
Were strained to that breast;

Far, far from each other
Our spirits have grown;
And what heart knows another?
Ah! who knows his own?

Blow, ye winds! lift me with you!
I come to the wild.
Fold closely, O Nature!
Thine arms round thy child.

To thee only God granted
A heart ever new—
To all always open,
To all always true.

Ah! calm me, restore me;
And dry up my tears
On thy high mountain-platforms,
Where morn first appears;

Where the white mists, for ever,
Are spread and upfurled—
In the stir of the forces
Whence issued the world.

3. A FAREWELL

MY HORSE's feet beside the lake,
Where sweet the unbroken moonbeams lay,
Sent echoes through the night to wake
Each glistening strand, each heath-fringed
bay.

The poplar avenue was passed,
And the roofed bridge that spans the
stream;
Up the steep street I hurried fast,
Led by thy taper's starlike beam.

I came! I saw thee rise!—the blood
Poured flushing to thy languid cheek.
Locked in each other's arms we stood,
In tears, with hearts too full to speak.

Days flew;—ah, soon I could discern
A trouble in thine altered air!
Thy hand lay languidly in mine,
Thy cheek was grave, thy speech grew rare.

I blame thee not!—this heart, I know,
To be long loved was never framed;
For something in its depths doth glow
Too strange, too restless, too untamed.

And women—things that live and move
Mined by the fever of the soul—
They seek to find in those they love
Stern strength, and promise of control.

They ask not kindness, gentle ways—
These they themselves have tried and
known;
They ask a soul which never sways
With the blind gusts that shake their own.

I too have felt the load I bore
In a too strong emotion's sway;
I too have wished, no woman more,
This starting, feverish heart away.

I too have longed for trenchant force,
And will like a dividing spear;
Have praised the keen, unscrupulous course,
Which knows no doubt, which feels no fear.

But in the world I learned, what there
Thou too wilt surely one day prove,
That will, that energy, though rare,
Are yet far, far less rare than love.

Go, then!—till time and fate impress
This truth on thee, be mine no more!
They will!—for thou, I feel, not less
Than I, wast destined to this lore.

We school our manners, act our parts—
But He, who sees us through and through,
Knows that the bent of both our hearts
Was to be gentle, tranquil, true.

And though we wear out life, alas!
Distracted as a homeless wind,
In beating where we must not pass,
In seeking what we shall not find;

Yet we shall one day gain, life past,
Clear prospect o'er our being's whole;
Shall see ourselves, and learn at last
Our true affinities of soul.

We shall not then deny a course
To every thought the mass ignore;
We shall not then call hardness force,
Nor lightness wisdom any more.

Then, in the eternal Father's smile,
Our soothed, encouraged souls will dare
To seem as free from pride and guile,
As good, as generous, as they are.

Then we shall know our friends!—though
much
Will have been lost—the help in strife,
The thousand sweet, still joys of such
As hand in hand face earthly life—

Though these be lost, there will be yet
A sympathy august and pure;
Ennobled by a vast regret,
And by contrition sealed thrice sure.

And we, whose ways were unlike here,
May then more neighboring courses ply;
May to each other be brought near,
And greet across infinity.

How sweet, unreachd by earthly jars,
My sister! to maintain with thee
The hush among the shining stars,
The calm upon the moonlit sea!

How sweet to feel, on the boon air,
All our unquiet pulses cease!
To feel that nothing can impair
The gentleness, the thirst for peace—

The gentleness too rudely hurled
On this wild earth of hate and fear;
The thirst for peace a raving world
Would never let us satiate here.

4. ISOLATION. TO MARGUERITE

WE WERE apart; yet, day by day,
I bade my heart more constant be.
I bade it keep the world away,
And grow a home for only thee;
Nor feared but thy love likewise grew,
Like mine, each day, more tried, more true.

The fault was grave! I might have known,
What far too soon, alas! I learned—
The heart can bind itself alone,
And faith may oft be unreturned.
Self-swayed our feelings ebb and swell—
Thou lov'st no more;—Farewell! Farewell!

Farewell!—and thou, thou lonely heart,
Which never yet without remorse
Even for a moment didst depart
From thy remote and spheréd course
To haunt the place where passions reign—
Back to thy solitude again!

Back! with the conscious thrill of shame
Which Luna¹ felt, that summer night,
Flash through her pure immortal frame,
When she forsook the starry height
To hang over Endymion's sleep
Upon the pine-grown Latmian steep.

Yet she, chaste queen, had never proved
How vain a thing is mortal love,
Wandering in Heaven, far removed.
But thou hast long had place to prove
This truth—to prove, and make thine own:
"Thou hast been, shalt be, art, alone."

Or, if not quite alone, yet they
Which touch thee are unmating things—
Ocean and clouds and night and day;
Lorn autumns and triumphant springs;
And life, and others' joy and pain,
And love, if love, of happier men.

Of happier men—for they, at least,
Have *dreamed* two human hearts might
blend

In one, and were through faith released
From isolation without end
Prolonged; nor knew, although not less
Alone than thou, their loneliness.

5. TO MARGUERITE—CONTINUED

YES! in the sea of life enisled,
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
We mortal millions live *alone*.
The islands feel the enclapping flow,
And then their endless bounds they know.

But when the moon their hollows lights,
And they are swept by balms of spring,
And in their glens, on starry nights,
The nightingales divinely sing;
And lovely notes, from shore to shore,
Across the sounds and channels pour—

¹Artemis.

Oh! then a longing like despair
Is to their farthest caverns sent;
For surely once, they feel, we were
Parts of a single continent!
Now round us spreads the watery plain—
Oh might our margins meet again!

Who ordered, that their longing's fire
Should be, as soon as kindled, cooled?
Who renders vain their deep desire?—
A God, a God their severance ruled!
And bade betwixt their shores to be
The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea.

6. ABSENCE

IN THIS fair stranger's eyes of gray
Thine eyes, my love! I see.
I shiver; for the passing day
Had borne me far from thee.

This is the curse of life! that not
A nobler, calmer train
Of wiser thoughts and feelings blot
Our passions from our brain;

But each day brings its petty dust
Our soon-choked souls to fill,
And we forget because we must
And not because we will.

I struggle towards the light; and ye,
Once-longed-for storms of love!
If with the light ye cannot be,
I bear that ye remove.

I struggle towards the light—but oh,
While yet the night is chill,
Upon time's barren, stormy flow,
Stay with me, Marguerite, still!

7. THE TERRACE AT BERNE

(COMPOSED TEN YEARS AFTER THE PRECEDING)

TEN years!—and to my waking eye
Once more the roofs of Berne appear;
The rocky banks, the terrace high,
The stream!—and do I linger here?

The clouds are on the Oberland,
The Jungfrau snows look faint and far;
But bright are those green fields at hand,
And through those fields comes down the
Aar,

And from the blue twin-lakes it comes,
Flows by the town, the churchyard fair;
And 'neath the garden-walk it hums,
The house!—and is my Marguerite there?

Ah, shall I see thee, while a flush
Of startled pleasure floods thy brow,
Quick through the oleanders brush,
And clap thy hands, and cry: "'Tis thou!"

Or hast thou long since wandered back,
Daughter of France! to France, thy home;
And flitted down the flowery track
Where feet like thine too lightly come?

Doth riotous laughter now replace
Thy smile; and rouge, with stony glare,
Thy cheek's soft hue; and fluttering lace
The kerchief that enwound thy hair?

Or is it over?—art thou dead?—
Dead!—and no warning shiver ran
Across my heart, to say thy thread
Of life was cut, and closed thy span!

Could from earth's ways that figure slight
Be lost, and I not feel 'twas so?
Of that fresh voice the gay delight
Fail from earth's air, and I not know?

Or shall I find thee still, but changed,
But not the Marguerite of thy prime?
With all thy being re-arranged,
Passed through the crucible of time;

With spirit vanished, beauty waned,
And hardly yet a glance, a tone,
A gesture—anything—retained
Of all that was my Marguerite's own?

I will not know! For wherefore try,
To things by mortal course that live,
A shadowy durability,
For which they were not meant, to give?

Like driftwood spars, which meet and pass
Upon the boundless ocean-plain,
So on the sea of life, alas!
Man meets man—meets, and quits again.

I knew it when my life was young;
I feel it still, now youth is o'er.
—The mists are on the mountain hung,
And Marguerite I shall see no more.

PHILOMELA¹

HARK! ah, the nightingale—
The tawny-throated!
Hark, from that moonlit cedar what a burst!
What triumph! hark—what pain!

O wanderer from a Grecian shore,
Still, after many years, in distant lands,
Still nourishing in thy bewildered brain
That wild, unquenched, deep-sunken, old-
world pain—

Say, will it never heal?
And can this fragrant lawn
With its cool trees, and night,
And the sweet, tranquil Thames,
And moonshine, and the dew,
To thy racked heart and brain
Afford no balm?

Dost thou to-night behold
Here, through the moonlight on this English
grass,

The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild?
Dost thou again peruse
With hot cheeks and seared eyes
The too clear web, and thy dumb sister's
shame?

Dost thou once more assay
Thy flight, and feel come over thee,
Poor fugitive, the feathery change
Once more, and once more seem to make re-
sound

With love and hate, triumph and agony,
Lone Daulis, and the high Cephissian vale?
Listen, Eugenia—
How thick the bursts come crowding through
the leaves!

Again—thou hearest?
Eternal Passion!
Eternal Pain!

¹Philomela was violated by her brother-in-law, Tereus, King of Daulis, who thereafter cut out her tongue so that she might not betray the deed. She, however, made it known to her sister Procne, Tereus's wife, by weaving words into a robe ("the too clear web"). Procne killed her son, gave his body as food to his father, and fled with Philomela. When Tereus pursued them, and they prayed for deliverance, the gods changed them into birds—Philomela into a nightingale. In the poem (published in 1853), Arnold reverses the positions of Philomela and Procne.

DOVER BEACH¹

THE sea is calm to-night.
 The tide is full, the moon lies fair
 Upon the straits;—on the French coast the
 light
 Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England
 stand,
 Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil
 bay.
 Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
 Only, from the long line of spray
 Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd
 land,
 Listen! you hear the grating roar
 Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and
 fling,
 At their return, up the high strand,
 Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
 With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
 The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
 Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
 Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
 Of human misery; we
 Find also in the sound a thought,
 Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
 Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's
 shore

Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
 But now I only hear
 Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
 Retreating, to the breath
 Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
 And naked shingles² of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
 To one another! for the world, which seems
 To lie before us like a land of dreams,
 So various, so beautiful, so new,
 Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
 Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
 And we are here as on a darkling plain
 Swept with confused alarms of struggle and
 flight,
 Where ignorant armies clash by night.

¹Published in 1867.

²Pebbly shores.

SELF-DEPENDENCE³

WEARY of myself, and sick of asking
 What I am, and what I ought to be,
 At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears me
 Forwards, forwards, o'er the star-lit sea.

And a look of passionate desire
 O'er the sea and to the stars I send:
 "Ye who from my childhood up have calmed
 me,
 Calm me, ah, compose me to the end!

"Ah, once more," I cried, "ye stars, ye
 waters,
 On my heart your mighty charm renew;
 Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,
 Feel my soul becoming vast like you!"

From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of
 heaven,
 Over the lit sea's unquiet way,
 In the rustling night-air came the answer:
 "Wouldst thou *be* as these are? *Live* as
 they.

"Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
 Undistracted by the sights they see,
 These demand not that the things without
 them
 Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

"And with joy the stars perform their shin-
 ing,
 And the sea its long moon-silvered roll;
 For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting
 All the fever of some differing soul.

"Bounded by themselves, and unregardful
 In what state God's other works may be,
 In their own tasks all their powers pouring,
 These attain the mighty life you see."

O air-born voice! long since, severely clear,
 A cry like thine in my own heart I hear:
 "Resolve to be thyself; and know that he,
 Who finds himself, loses his misery!"

³Published in 1852.

MORALITY¹

WE CANNOT kindle when we will
 The fire which in the heart resides;
 The spirit bloweth and is still,
 In mystery our soul abides.
 But tasks in hours of insight willed
 Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled.

With aching hands and bleeding feet
 We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;
 We bear the burden and the heat
 Of the long day, and wish 'twere done.
 Not till the hours of light return,
 All we have built do we discern.

Then, when the clouds are off the soul,
 When thou dost bask in Nature's eye,
 Ask, how *she* viewed thy self-control,
 Thy struggling, tasked morality—
 Nature, whose free, light, cheerful air,
 Oft made thee, in thy gloom, despair.

And she, whose censure thou dost dread,
 Whose eye thou wast afraid to seek,
 See, on her face a glow is spread,
 A strong emotion on her cheek!
 "Ah child!" she cries, "that strife divine,
 Whence was it, for it is not mine?"

"There is no effort on *my* brow—
 I do not strive, I do not weep;
 I rush with the swift spheres and glow
 In joy, and when I will, I sleep.
 Yet that severe, that earnest air,
 I saw, I felt it once—but where?"

"I knew not yet the gauge of time,
 Nor wore the manacles of space;
 I felt it in some other clime,
 I saw it in some other place.
 'Twas when the heavenly house I trod,
 And lay upon the breast of God."

THE BURIED LIFE²

LIGHT flows our war of mocking words, and
 yet,
 Behold, with tears mine eyes are wet!
 I feel a nameless sadness o'er me roll.

Yes, yes, we know that we can jest,
 We know, we know that we can smile!
 But there's a something in this breast,
 To which thy light words bring no rest,
 And thy gay smiles no anodyne.
 Give me thy hand, and hush awhile,
 And turn those limpid eyes on mine,
 And let me read there, love! thy inmost soul.

Alas! is even love too weak
 To unlock the heart, and let it speak?
 Are even lovers powerless to reveal
 To one another what indeed they feel?
 I knew the mass of men concealed
 Their thoughts, for fear that if revealed
 They would by other men be met
 With blank indifference, or with blame re-
 proved;
 I knew they lived and moved
 Tricked in disguises, alien to the rest
 Of men, and alien to themselves—and yet
 The same heart beats in every human breast!

But we, my love!—doth a like spell benumb
 Our hearts, our voices?—must we too be
 dumb?

Ah! well for us, if even we,
 Even for a moment, can get free
 Our heart, and have our lips unchained;
 For that which seals them hath been deep-
 ordained!

Fate, which foresaw
 How frivolous a baby man would be—
 By what distractions he would be possessed,
 How he would pour himself in every strife,
 And well-nigh change his own identity—
 That it might keep from his capricious play
 His genuine self, and force him to obey
 Even in his own despite his being's law,
 Bade through the deep recesses of our breast
 The unregarded river of our life
 Pursue with indiscernible flow its way;
 And that we should not see
 The buried stream, and seem to be
 Eddying at large in blind uncertainty,
 Though driving on with it eternally.

But often, in the world's most crowded
 streets,
 But often, in the din of strife,
 There rises an unspeakable desire
 After the knowledge of our buried life;

¹Published in 1852.²Published in 1852.

A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
 In tracking out our true, original course;
 A longing to inquire
 Into the mystery of this heart which beats
 So wild, so deep in us—to know
 Whence our lives come and where they go.
 And many a man in his own breast then
 delves,

But deep enough, alas! none ever mines.
 And we have been on many thousand lines,
 And we have shown, on each, spirit and
 power;
 But hardly have we, for one little hour,
 Been on our own line, have we been our-
 selves—

Hardly had skill to utter one of all
 The nameless feelings that course through
 our breast,

But they course on for ever unexpressed.
 And long we try in vain to speak and act
 Our hidden self, and what we say and do
 Is eloquent, is well—but 'tis not true!
 And then we will no more be racked
 With inward striving, and demand
 Of all the thousand nothings of the hour
 Their stupefying power;
 Ah yes, and they benumb us at our call!
 Yet still, from time to time, vague and for-
 lorn,

From the soul's subterranean depth upborne
 As from an infinitely distant land,
 Come airs, and floating echoes, and convey
 A melancholy into all our day.

Only—but this is rare—
 When a beloved hand is laid in ours,
 When, jaded with the rush and glare
 Of the interminable hours,
 Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,
 When our world-deafened ear
 Is by the tones of a loved voice caressed—
 A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,
 And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again.
 The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies
 plain,
 And what we mean, we say, and what we
 would, we know.

A man becomes aware of his life's flow,
 And hears its winding murmur; and he sees
 The meadows where it glides, the sun, the
 breeze.

And there arrives a lull in the hot race
 Wherein he doth for ever chase

That flying and elusive shadow, rest.
 An air of coolness plays upon his face,
 And an unwonted calm pervades his breast.
 And then he thinks he knows
 The hills where his life rose,
 And the sea where it goes.

THE FUTURE¹

A WANDERER is man from his birth.
 He was born in a ship
 On the breast of the river of Time;
 Brimming with wonder and joy
 He spreads out his arms to the light,
 Rivets his gaze on the banks of the stream.

As what he sees is, so have his thoughts been.
 Whether he wakes,
 Where the snowy mountainous pass,
 Echoing the screams of the eagles,
 Hems in its gorges the bed
 Of the new-born clear-flowing stream;
 Whether he first sees light
 Where the river in gleaming rings
 Sluggishly winds through the plain;
 Whether in sound of the swallowing sea—
 As is the world on the banks,
 So is the mind of the man.

Vainly does each, as he glides,
 Fable and dream
 Of the lands which the river of Time
 Had left ere he woke on its breast,
 Or shall reach when his eyes have been
 closed.

Only the tract where he sails
 He wots of; only the thoughts,
 Raised by the objects he passes, are his.

Who can see the green earth any more
 As she was by the sources of Time?
 Who imagines her fields as they lay
 In the sunshine, unworn by the plough?
 Who thinks as they thought,
 The tribes who then roamed on her breast,
 Her vigorous, primitive sons?

What girl
 Now reads in her bosom as clear
 As Rebekah read, when she sat
 At eve by the palm-shaded well?²
 Who guards in her breast

¹Published in 1852.

²See Genesis, xxiv.

As deep, as pellucid a spring
Of feeling, as tranquil, as sure?

What bard,
At the height of his vision, can deem
Of God, of the world, of the soul,
With a plainness as near,
As flashing as Moses felt
When he lay in the night by his flock
On the starlit Arabian waste?¹
Can rise and obey
The beck of the Spirit like him?

This tract which the river of Time
Now flows through with us, is the plain.
Gone is the calm of its earlier shore.
Bordered by cities and hoarse
With a thousand cries is its stream.
And we on its breast, our minds
Are confused as the cries which we hear,
Changing and shot as the sights which we
see.

And we say that repose has fled
For ever the course of the river of Time.
That cities will crowd to its edge
In a blacker, incessanter line;
That the din will be more on its banks,
Denser the trade on its stream,
Flatter the plain where it flows,
Fiercer the sun overhead.
That never will those on its breast
See an ennobling sight,
Drink of the feeling of quiet again.

But what was before us we know not,
And we know not what shall succeed.

Haply, the river of Time—
As it grows, as the towns on its marge
Fling their wavering lights
On a wider, statelier stream—
May acquire, if not the calm
Of its early mountainous shore,
Yet a solemn peace of its own.

And the width of the waters, the hush
Of the gray expanse where he floats,
Freshening its current and spotted with
foam
As it draws to the Ocean, may strike
Peace to the soul of the man on its breast—

As the pale waste widens around him,
As the banks fade dimmer away,
As the stars come out, and the night-wind
Brings up the stream
Murmurs and scents of the infinite sea.

THE SCHOLAR-GYPSY²

Go, FOR they call you, shepherd, from the
hill;

Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes!³

No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their
throats,

Nor the cropped herbage shoot another
head.

But when the fields are still,
And the tired men and dogs all gone to
rest,

And only the white sheep are some-
times seen

Cross and recross the strips of moon-
blanched green,

Come, shepherd, and again begin the quest!

Here, where the reaper was at work of late—

In this high field's dark corner, where he
leaves

His coat, his basket, and his earthen
cruse,

And in the sun all morning binds the
sheaves,

Then here, at noon, comes back his
stores to use—

Here will I sit and wait,

²"There was very lately a lad in the University of Oxford, who was by his poverty forced to leave his studies there; and at last to join himself to a company of vagabond gypsies. Among these extravagant people, by the insinuating subtlety of his carriage, he quickly got so much of their love and esteem as that they discovered to him their mystery. After he had been a pretty while exercised in the trade, there chanced to ride by a couple of scholars, who had formerly been of his acquaintance. They quickly spied out their old friend among the gypsies; and he gave them an account of the necessity which drove him to that kind of life, and told them that the people he went with were not such impostors as they were taken for, but that they had a traditional kind of learning among them, and could do wonders by the power of imagination, their fancy binding that of others; that himself had learned much of their art, and when he had compassed the whole secret, he intended, he said, to leave their company, and give the world an account of what he had learned."—Glanvil, *Vanity of Dogmatizing*, 1661 (Arnold's note). The poem was published in 1853.

³Sheep-folds.

¹See Exodus, iii.

While to my ear from uplands far away
 The bleating of the folded flocks is
 borne,
 With distant cries of reapers in the
 corn—
 All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screened is this nook o'er the high, half-
 reaped field,
 And here till sun-down, shepherd! will I
 be.
 Through the thick corn the scarlet
 poppies peep,
 And round green roots and yellowing
 stalks I see
 Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep;
 And air-swept lindens yield
 Their scent, and rustle down their per-
 fumed showers
 Of bloom on the bent grass where I am
 laid,
 And bower me from the August sun with
 shade;
 And the eye travels down to Oxford's
 towers.

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's
 book—
 Come, let me read the oft-read tale again!
 The story of the Oxford scholar poor,
 Of 'pregnant parts and quick inventive
 brain,
 Who, tired of knocking at preferment's¹
 door,
 One summer morn forsook
 His friends, and went to learn the gypsy-
 lore,
 And roamed the world with that wild
 brotherhood,
 And came, as most men deemed, to little
 good,
 But came to Oxford and his friends no
 more.

But once, years after, in the country lanes,
 Two scholars, whom at college erst he
 knew,
 Met him, and of his way of life inquired;
 Whereat he answered, that the gypsy-
 crew,
 His mates, had arts to rule as they de-
 sired
 The workings of men's brains,

And they can bind them to what thoughts
 they will.

"And I," he said, "the secret of their art,
 When fully learned, will to the world
 impart;
 But it needs heaven-sent moments for
 this skill."

This said, he left them, and returned no
 more.—

But rumors hung about the country-side,
 That the lost Scholar long was seen to
 stray,

Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-
 tied,

In hat of antique shape, and cloak of
 gray,

The same the gypsies wore.

Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in
 spring;

At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire
 moors,

On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-
 frocked boors

Had found him seated at their entering,

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would
 fly.

And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
 And put the shepherds, wanderer! on
 thy trace;

And boys who in lone wheatfields scare
 the rooks

I ask if thou hast passed their quiet
 place;

Or in my boat I lie

Moored to the cool bank in the summer
 heats,

'Mid wide grass meadows which the
 sunshine fills,

And watch the warm, green-muffled
 Cumner hills,

And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy re-
 treats.

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground!
 Thee at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,

Returning home on summer nights,
 have met

Crossing the stripling Thames at Bab-lock-
 hithe,

Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers
 wet,

As the punt's rope chops round;

¹U. e., of trying to secure a post in the Church.

And leaning backward in a pensive dream,
 And fostering in thy lap a heap of
 flowers
 Plucked in shy fields and distant Wych-
 wood¹ bowers,
 And thine eyes resting on the moonlit
 stream.

And then they land, and thou art seen no
 more!—
 Maidens, who from the distant hamlets
 come
 To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,
 Oft through the darkening fields have
 seen thee roam,
 Or cross a stile into the public way.
 Oft thou hast given them store
 Of flowers—the frail-leafed, white anem-
 one,
 Dark bluebells drenched with dews of
 summer eves,
 And purple orchises with spotted
 leaves—
 But none hath words she can report of
 thee.

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-
 time's here
 In June, and many a scythe in sunshine
 flames,
 Men who through those wide fields of
 breezy grass
 Where black-winged swallows haunt the
 glittering Thames,
 To bathe in the abandoned lasher² pass,
 Have often passed thee near
 Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown;
 Marked thine outlandish garb, thy
 figure spare,
 Thy dark vague eyes, and soft ab-
 stracted air—
 But, when they came from bathing, thou
 wast gone!

At some lone homestead in the Cumner hills,
 Where at her open door the housewife
 darns,
 Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate
 To watch the threshers in the mossy
 barns.
 Children, who early range these slopes
 and late

For cresses from the rills,
 Have known thee eyeing, all an April-day,
 The springing pastures and the feeding
 kine;
 And marked thee, when the stars come
 out and shine,
 Through the long dewy grass move slow
 away.

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley wood—
 Where most the gypsies by the turf-
 edged way
 Pitch their smoked tents, and every
 bush you see
 With scarlet patches tagged and shreds of
 gray,
 Above the forest ground called Thes-
 saly—
 The blackbird, picking food,
 Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at
 all;
 So often has he known thee past him
 stray,
 Rapt, twirling in thy hand a withered
 spray,
 And waiting for the spark from heaven
 to fall.

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill
 Where home through flooded fields foot-
 travelers go,
 Have I not passed thee on the wooden
 bridge,
 Wrapped in thy cloak and battling with
 the snow,
 Thy face tow'rd Hinksey and its wintry
 ridge?
 And thou hast climbed the hill
 And gained the white brow of the Cum-
 ner range;
 Turned once to watch, while thick the
 snowflakes fall,
 The line of festal light in Christ-Church
 hall³—
 Then sought thy straw in some sequestered
 grange.

But what—I dream! Two hundred years
 are flown
 Since first thy story ran through Oxford
 halls,
 And the grave Glanvil did the tale
 inscribe

¹A forest about ten miles from Oxford.

²The pool below a dam.

³The hall of Christ Church College, Oxford.

That thou wert wandered from the studious walls

To learn strange arts, and join a gypsy-tribe;

And thou from earth art gone

Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid—

Some country-nook, where o'er thy unknown grave

Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,

Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's shade.

—No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours!

For what wears out the life of mortal men?

'Tis that from change to change their being rolls;

'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,
Exhaust the energy of strongest souls
And numb the elastic powers.

Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,¹

And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,

To the just-pausing Genius we remit
Our worn-out life, and are—what we have been.

Thou hast not lived, why should'st thou perish, so?

Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire;

Else wert thou long since numbered with the dead!

Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire!

The generations of thy peers are fled,
And we ourselves shall go;

But thou possessest an immortal lot,
And we imagine thee exempt from age
And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,

Because thou hadst—what we, alas! have not.

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers

Fresh, undiverted to the world without,

Firm to their mark, not spent on other things;

Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,

Which much to have tried, in much been baffled, brings.

O life unlike to ours!

Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,

And each half lives a hundred different lives;

Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope.

Thou waitest for the spark from heaven! and we,

Light half-believers of our casual creeds,
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly willed,

Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,

Whose vague resolves never have been fulfilled;

For whom each year we see
Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new;

Who hesitate and falter life away,
And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day—

Ah, do not we, wanderer! await it too?

Yes, we await it!—but it still delays,

And then we suffer! and amongst us one,²

Who most has suffered, takes dejectedly
His seat upon the intellectual throne;

And all his store of sad experience he
Lays bare of wretched days;

Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,

And how the dying spark of hope was fed,
And how the breast was soothed, and how the head,

And all his hourly varied anodynes.

This for our wisest! and we others pine,

And wish the long unhappy dream would end,

And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear;

With close-lipped patience for our only friend,

Sad patience, too near neighbor to despair—

But none has hope like thine!

¹Suffering.
²Whether or not Arnold had in mind some contemporary is not known. Carlyle has been suggested and, with much greater plausibility, Tennyson.

Thou through the fields and through the
woods dost stray,
Roaming the country-side, a truant boy,
Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,
And every doubt long blown by time away.

O born in days when wits were fresh and
clear,
And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames;
Before this strange disease of modern
life,
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its heads o'ertaxed, its palsied hearts,
was rife—
Fly hence, our contact fear!
Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering
wood!
Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern
From her false friend's approach in
Hades turn,¹
Wave us away, and keep thy solitude!

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,
With a free, onward impulse brushing
through,
By night, the silvered branches of the
glade—
Far on the forest skirts, where none
pursue,
On some mild pastoral slope
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales
Freshen thy flowers as in former years
With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales!

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!
For strong the infection of our mental
strife,
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet
spoils for rest;
And we should win thee from thy own fair
life,
Like us distracted, and like us unblest.
Soon, soon thy cheer would die,
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfixed
thy powers,
And thy clear aims be cross and shifting
made;
And then thy glad perennial youth
would fade,
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like
ours.

¹The "false friend" was Æneas; see *Æneid*, VI, 469.

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and
smiles!

—As some grave Tyrian trader, from the
sea,

Descried at sunrise an emerging prow
Lifting the cool-haired creepers stealthily,

The fringes of a southward-facing brow
Among the Ægean isles;

And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,
Freighted with amber grapes, and
Chian wine,

Green, bursting figs, and tunnies²
steeped in brine—

And knew the intruders on his ancient
home,

The young light-hearted masters of the
waves—

And snatched his rudder, and shook out
more sail;

And day and night held on indignantly
O'er the blue Midland³ waters with the
gale,

Betwixt the Syrtes⁴ and soft Sicily,

To where the Atlantic raves

Outside the western straits; and unbent
sails

There, where down cloudy cliffs, through
sheets of foam,

Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians⁵ come;

And on the beach undid his corded bales.

THYRSIS⁶

A MONODY

*To commemorate the Author's friend, ARTHUR
HUGH CLOUGH, who died at Florence, 1861.*

How changed is here each spot man makes
or fills!

In the two Hinkseys nothing keeps the
same;

The village street its haunted mansion
lacks,

And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,
And from the roofs the twisted chimney-
stacks—

Are ye too changed, ye hills?

²A large oceanic fish. ³Mediterranean.

⁴Shoals off the north coast of Africa.

⁵Inhabitants of the Spanish peninsula

⁶Throughout this poem there is reference to the preceding piece, *The Scholar-Gypsy* (Arnold's note). The poem was published in 1867

See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men
To-night from Oxford up your pathway
strays!

Here came I often, often, in old days—
Thyrsis and I; we still had Thyrsis then.

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth
Farm,

Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree
crowns

The hill behind whose ridge the sunset
flames?

The signal-elm, that looks on Ilsley
Downs,

The Vale, the three lone weirs,¹ the
youthful Thames?—

This winter-eve is warm,

Humid the air! leafless, yet soft as spring,
The tender purple spray on copse and
briers!

And that sweet city with her dreaming
spires

She needs not June for beauty's heighten-
ing,

Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night!—

Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power
Befalls me wandering through this up-
land dim.

Once passed I blindfold here, at any hour;
Now seldom come I, since I came with
him.

That single elm-tree bright
Against the west—I miss it! is it gone?

We prized it dearly; while it stood, we
said,

Our friend, the Gypsy-Scholar, was not
dead;

While the tree lived, he in these fields
lived on.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here,
But once I knew each field, each flower,
each stick;

And with the country-folk acquaintance
made

By barn in threshing-time, by new-built
rick.

Here, too, our shepherd-pipes we first
assayed.

Ah me! this many a year

My pipe is lost, my shepherd's holiday!
Needs must I lose them, needs with
heavy heart

Into the world and wave of men de-
part;

But Thyrsis of his own will went away.

It irked him to be here, he could not rest.²

He loved each simple joy the country
yields,

He loved his mates; but yet he could not
keep,

For that a shadow lowered on the fields,
Here with the shepherds and the silly
sheep.

Some life of men unblest

He knew, which made him droop, and
filled his head.

He went; his piping took a troubled
sound

Of storms that rage outside our happy
ground;

He could not wait their passing, he is dead.

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
When the year's primal burst of bloom is
o'er,

Before the roses and the longest day—

When garden-walks and all the grassy floor
With blossoms red and white of fallen

May

And chestnut-flowers are strewn—

So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vexed
garden-trees,

Come with the volleying rain and tossing
breeze:

The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I!

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?

Soon will the high Midsummer pomps
come on,

Soon will the musk carnations break and
swell,

Soon shall we have gold-dusted snap-
dragon,

Sweet-William with its homely cottage-
smell,

And stocks in fragrant blow;

¹Clough, who was, like Arnold, a Fellow of Oriel College, left Oxford in 1848, dissatisfied with his work there and uneasy, because of religious questionings, about professing conformity to the Anglican Church, as an Oxford tutor then had to do. He tried several other kinds of work in following years.

¹Dams.

Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
And the full moon, and the white evening-star.

He hearkens not! light comes, he is flown!
What matters it? next year he will return,
And we shall have him in the sweet
spring-days,
With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling
fern,
And blue-bells trembling by the forest-
ways,
And scent of hay new-mown.
But Thyrsis never more we swains shall
see;
See him come back, and cut a smoother
reed,
And blow a strain the world at last
shall heed—
For Time, not Corydon, hath conquered
thee.¹

• Alack, for Corydon no rival now!—
But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
Some good survivor with his flute would
go,
Piping a ditty sad for Bion's² fate;
And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow
And relax Pluto's brow,
And make leap up with joy the beauteous
head
Of Proserpine, among whose crownéd
hair
Are flowers first opened on Sicilian air,³
And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the
dead.

O easy access to the hearer's grace,
When Dorian shepherds sang to Proser-
pine!
For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,
She knew each lily white which Enna
yields,
Each rose with blushing face;

¹Corydon is the winner in a verse-contest with Thyrsis in Virgil's *Eclogue* VII.

²Sicilian poet upon whose death Moschus wrote an elegy.

³Pluto carried off Proserpine, seizing her while she was gathering flowers at Enna in Sicily, to be his queen of the lower world.

She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian
strain.
But ah, of our poor Thames she never
heard!
Her foot the Cumner cowslips never
stirred;
And we should tease her with our plaint
in vain!

Well! wind-dispersed and vain the words
will be,
Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
In the old haunt, and find our tree-
topped hill!
Who, if not I, for questing here hath
power?
I know the wood which hides the daffodil,
I know the Fyfield tree,
I know what white, what purple fritil-
laries⁴
The grassy harvest of the river-fields,
Above by Ensham, down by Sanford,
yields,
And what sedged brooks are Thames's
tributaries;

I know these slopes; who knows them if
not I?—
But many a dingle on the loved hill-side,
With thorns once studded, old, white-
blossomed trees,
Where thick the cowslips grew, and far
descried
High towered the spikes of purple or-
chises,
Hath since our day put by
The coronals of that forgotten time;
Down each green bank hath gone the
ploughboy's team,
And only in the hidden brookside gleam
Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime.

Where is the girl, who by the boatman's door,
Above the locks, above the boating throng,
Unmoored our skiff when through the
Wytham flats,
Red loosèstrife⁵ and blond meadow-sweet
among,
And darting swallows and light water-
gnats,
We tracked the shy Thames shore?

⁴A bell-shaped flower which grows in fields bordering the Thames.

⁵A flowering plant.

Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny
 swell
 Of our boat passing heaved the river-
 grass,
 Stood with suspended scythe to see us
 pass?—
 They all are gone, and thou art gone as
 well!

Yes, thou art gone! and round me too the
 night

In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.
 I see her veil draw soft across the day,
 I feel her slowly chilling breath invade
 The cheek grown thin, the brown hair
 sprent¹ with gray;
 I feel her finger light

Laid pausefully upon life's headlong
 train;—

The foot less prompt to meet the morn-
 ing dew,

The heart less bounding at emotion new,
 And hope, once crushed, less quick to
 spring again.

And long the way appears, which seemed
 so short

To the less practised eye of sanguine
 youth;

And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy
 air,

The mountain-tops where is the throne of
 Truth,

Tops in life's morning-sun so bright and
 bare!

Unbreachable the fort

Of the long-battered world uplifts its wall;
 And strange and vain the earthly tur-
 moil grows,

And near and real the charm of thy
 repose,

And night as welcome as a friend would
 fall.

But hush! the upland hath a sudden loss

Of quiet!—Look, adown the dusk hillside,
 A troop of Oxford hunters going home,

As in old days, jovial and talking, ride!
 From hunting with the Berkshire

hounds they come.

Quick! let me fly, and cross

Into yon farther field!—'Tis done; and
 see,

Backed by the sunset, which doth
 glorify

The orange and pale violet evening-sky,
 Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree! the
 Tree!

I take the omen! Eve lets down her veil,
 The white fog creeps from bush to bush
 about,

The west unflushes, the high stars grow
 bright,

And in the scattered farms the lights come
 out.

I cannot reach the signal-tree to-night,
 Yet, happy omen, hail!

Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-vale²
 (For there thine earth-forgetting eye-
 lids keep

The morningless and unawakening sleep
 Under the flowery oleanders pale),

Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our tree is there!—
 Ah, vain! These English fields, this
 upland dim,

These brambles pale with mist en-
 garlanded,

That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for
 him;

To a boon southern country he is fled,
 And now in happier air,

Wandering with the great Mother's³
 train divine

(And purer or more subtle soul than
 thee,

I trow, the mighty Mother doth not see)
 Within a folding of the Apennine,

Thou hearest the immortal chants of old!—
 Putting his sickle to the perilous grain

In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian
 king,

For thee the Lityerses-song again

Young Daphnis with his silver voice
 doth sing;⁴

Sings his Sicilian fold,

²The Arno flows through Florence.

³Rhea, mother of the gods.

⁴Daphnis, the ideal Sicilian shepherd of Greek pas-
 toral poetry, was said to have followed into Phrygia
 his mistress Piplea, who had been carried off by robbers,
 and to have found her in the power of the king of
 Phrygia, Lityerses. Lityerses used to make strangers

¹Sprinkled.

His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded
eyes—

And how a call celestial round him rang,
And heavenward from the fountain-
brink he sprang,
And all the marvel of the golden skies.

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest
here

Sole in these fields! yet will I not despair.
Despair I will not, while I yet descry

'Neath the mild canopy of English air
That lonely tree against the western sky.

Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,
Our Gypsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee!
Fields where soft sheep from cages pull
the hay,

Woods with anemones in flower till May,
Know him a wanderer still; then why not
me?

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
Shy to illumine; and I seek it too.

This does not come with houses or with
gold,

With place, with honor, and a flattering
crew;

'Tis not in the world's market bought
and sold—

But the smooth-slipping weeks
Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;
Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
He wends unfollowed, he must house
alone;

Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

try a contest with him in reaping corn, and to put them to death if he overcame them. Hercules arrived in time to save Daphnis, took upon himself the reaping-contest with Lityerses, overcame him, and slew him. The Lityerses-song connected with this tradition was, like the Linus-song, one of the early plaintive strains of Greek popular poetry, and used to be sung by corn-reapers. Other traditions represented Daphnis as beloved by a nymph who exacted from him an oath to love no one else. He fell in love with a princess, and was struck blind by the jealous nymph. Mercury, who was his father, raised him to Heaven, and made a fountain spring up in the place from which he ascended. At this fountain the Sicilians offered yearly sacrifices (Arnold's note).

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wast
bound;

Thou wanderedst with me for a little hour!
Men gave thee nothing; but this happy
quest,

If men esteemed thee feeble, gave thee
power,

If men procured thee trouble, gave thee
rest.

And this rude Cumner ground,
Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet
fields,

Here cam'st thou in thy jocund youthful
time,

Here was thine height of strength, thy
golden prime!

And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields.

What though the music of thy rustic flute
Kept not for long its happy, country tone;
Lost it too soon, and learned a stormy
note

Of men contention-tossed, of men who
groan,

Which tasked thy pipe too sore, and
tired thy throat—

It failed, and thou wast mute!

Yet hadst thou alway visions of our light,
And long with men of care thou couldst
not stay,

And soon thy foot resumed its wander-
ing way,

Left human haunt, and on alone till night.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here!
'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,
Thyrsis! in reach of sheep-bells is my
home.

—Then through the great town's harsh,
heart-wearying roar,

Let in thy voice a whisper often come,
To chase fatigue and fear:

*Why faintest thou? I wandered till I died.
Roam on! The light we sought is shining
still.*

*Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns
the hill,*

Our Scholar travels yet the loved hill-side.

RUGBY CHAPEL¹

NOVEMBER, 1857

COLDLY, sadly descends
 The autumn-evening. The field
 Strewn with its dank yellow drifts
 Of withered leaves, and the elms,
 Fade into dimness apace,
 Silent;—hardly a shout
 From a few boys late at their play!
 The lights come out in the street,
 In the school-room windows;—but cold,
 Solemn, unlighted, austere,
 Through the gathering darkness, arise
 The chapel-walls, in whose bound
 Thou, my father! art laid.

There thou dost lie, in the gloom
 Of the autumn evening. But ah!
 That word, *gloom*, to my mind
 Brings thee back, in the light
 Of thy radiant vigor, again;
 In the gloom of November we passed
 Days not dark at thy side;
 Seasons impaired not the ray
 Of thy buoyant cheerfulness clear.
 Such thou wast! and I stand
 In the autumn evening, and think
 Of bygone autumns with thee.

Fifteen years have gone round
 Since thou arosest to tread,
 In the summer-morning, the road
 Of death, at a call unforeseen,
 Sudden. For fifteen years,
 We who till then in thy shade
 Rested as under the boughs
 Of a mighty oak, have endured
 Sunshine and rain as we might,
 Bare, unshaded, alone,
 Lacking the shelter of thee.

O strong soul, by what shore
 Tarriest thou now? For that force,
 Surely, has not been left vain!
 Somewhere, surely, afar,
 In the sounding labor-house vast
 Of being, is practised that strength,
 Zealous, beneficent, firm!

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
 Conscious or not of the past,

Still thou performest the word
 Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live—
 Prompt, unwearied, as here!
 Still thou upraiest with zeal
 The humble good from the ground,
 Sternly represses the bad!
 Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse
 Those who with half-open eyes
 Tread the border-land dim
 'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,
 Succorest!—this was thy work,
 This was thy life upon earth.

What is the course of the life
 Of mortal men on the earth?—
 Most men eddy about
 Here and there—eat and drink,
 Chatter and love and hate,
 Gather and squander, are raised
 Aloft, are hurled in the dust,
 Striving blindly, achieving
 Nothing; and then they die—
 Perish;—and no one asks
 Who or what they have been,
 More than he asks what waves,
 In the moonlit solitudes mild
 Of the midmost Ocean, have swelled,
 Foamed for a moment, and gone.

And there are some, whom a thirst
 Ardent, unquenchable, fires,
 Not with the crowd to be spent,
 Not without aim to go round
 In an eddy of purposeless dust,
 Effort unmeaning and vain.
 Ah yes! some of us strive
 Not without action to die
 Fruitless, but something to snatch
 From dull oblivion, nor all
 Glut the devouring grave!
 We, we have chosen our path—
 Path to a clear-purposed goal,
 Path of advance!—but it leads
 A long, steep journey, through sunk
 Gorges, o'er mountains in snow.
 Cheerful, with friends, we set forth—
 Then, on the height, comes the storm.
 Thunder crashes from rock
 To rock, the cataracts reply,
 Lightnings dazzle our eyes.
 Roaring torrents have breached
 The track, the stream-bed descends
 In the place where the wayfarer once
 Planted his footstep—the spray

¹Published in 1867. Arnold's father, Thomas Arnold, died on 12 June, 1842, and was buried in Rugby Chapel.

Boils o'er its borders! aloft
 The unseen snow-beds dislodge
 Their hanging ruin; alas,
 Havoc is made in our train!
 Friends, who set forth at our side,
 Falter, are lost in the storm.
 We, we only are left!
 With frowning foreheads, with lips
 Sternly compressed, we strain on,
 On—and at nightfall at last
 Come to the end of our way,
 To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks;
 Where the gaunt and taciturn host
 Stands on the threshold, the wind
 Shaking his thin white hairs—
 Holds his lantern to scan
 Our storm-beat figures, and asks:
 Whom in our party we bring?
 Whom we have left in the snow?

Sadly we answer: We bring
 Only ourselves! we lost
 Sight of the rest in the storm.
 Hardly ourselves we fought through,
 Stripped, without friends, as we are.
 Friends, companions, and train,
 The avalanche swept from our side.

But thou wouldst not *alone*
 Be saved, my father! *alone*
 Conquer and come to thy goal,
 Leaving the rest in the wild.
 We were weary, and we
 Fearful, and we in our march
 Fain to drop down and to die.
 Still thou turnedst, and still
 Beckonedst the trembler, and still
 Gavest the weary thy hand.

If, in the paths of the world,
 Stones might have wounded thy feet,
 Toil or dejection have tried
 Thy spirit, of that we saw
 Nothing—to us thou wast still
 Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!
 Therefore to thee it was given
 Many to save with thyself;
 And, at the end of thy day,
 O faithful shepherd! to come,
 Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

And through thee I believe
 In the noble and great who are gone;
 Pure souls honored and blest

By former ages, who else—
 Such, so soulless, so poor,
 Is the race of men whom I see—
 Seemed but a dream of the heart,
 Seemed but a cry of desire.
 Yes! I believe that there lived
 Others like thee in the past,
 Not like the men of the crowd
 Who all round me to-day
 Bluster or cringe, and make life
 Hideous, and arid, and vile;
 But souls tempered with fire,
 Fervent, heroic, and good,
 Helpers and friends of mankind.

Servants of God!—or sons
 Shall I not call you? because
 Not as servants ye knew
 Your Father's innermost mind,
 His, who unwillingly sees
 One of his little ones lost—
 Yours is the praise, if mankind
 Hath not as yet in its march
 Fainted, and fallen, and died!

See! In the rocks of the world
 Marches the host of mankind,
 A feeble, wavering line.
 Where are they tending?—A God
 Marshaled them, gave them their goal.
 Ah, but the way is so long!
 Years they have been in the wild!
 Sore thirst plagues them; the rocks,
 Rising all round, overawe;
 Factions divide them, their host
 Threatens to break, to dissolve.
 —Ah! keep, keep them combined!
 Else, of the myriads who fill
 That army, not one shall arrive;
 Sole they shall stray; in the rocks
 Stagger for ever in vain,
 Die one by one in the waste.

Then, in such hour of need
 Of your fainting, dispirited race,
 Ye, like angels, appear,
 Radiant with ardor divine!
 Beacons of hope, ye appear!
 Languor is not in your heart,
 Weakness is not in your word,
 Weariness not on your brow.
 Ye alight in our van! at your voice,
 Panic, despair, flee away.
 Ye move through the ranks, recall

The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
 Praise, re-inspire the brave!
 Order, courage, return.
 Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
 Follow your steps as ye go.
 Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
 Strengthen the wavering line,
 Stablish, continue our march,
 On, to the bound of the waste,
 On, to the City of God.

STANZAS FROM THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE¹

THROUGH Alpine meadows soft-suffused
 With rain, where thick the crocus blows,
 Past the dark forges long disused,
 The mule-track from Saint Laurent goes.
 The bridge is crossed, and slow we ride,
 Through forest, up the mountain-side.

The autumnal evening darkens round,
 The wind is up, and drives the rain;
 While, hark! far down, with strangled sound
 Doth the Dead Guier's stream complain
 Where that wet smoke, among the woods,
 Over his boiling caldron broods.

Swift rush the spectral vapors white
 Past limestone scars with rugged pines,
 Showing—then blotting from our sight!—
 Halt—through the cloud-drift something
 shines!

High in the valley, wet and drear,
 The huts of Courrerie appear.

Strike leftward! cries our guide; and higher
 Mounts up the stony forest-way.
 At last the encircling trees retire;
 Look! through the showery twilight gray
 What pointed roofs are these advance?—
 A palace of the Kings of France?

Approach, for what we seek is here!
 Alight, and sparely sup, and wait
 For rest in this outbuilding near;
 Then cross the sward and reach that gate.
 Knock; pass the wicket! Thou art come
 To the Carthusians' world-famed home.

¹Published in 1855. The Grande Chartreuse is the chief monastery of the Carthusian monks, founded in the eleventh century. It is situated in the Alps of southeastern France.

The silent courts, where night and day
 Into their stone-carved basins cold
 The splashing icy fountains play—
 The humid corridors behold!
 Where, ghostlike in the deepening night,
 Cowed forms brush by in gleaming white.

The chapel, where no organ's peal
 Invests the stern and naked prayer—
 With penitential cries they kneel
 And wrestle; rising then, with bare
 And white uplifted faces stand,
 Passing the Host from hand to hand;

Each takes, and then his visage wan
 Is buried in his cowl once more.
 The cells!—the suffering Son of Man
 Upon the wall—the knee-worn floor—
 And where they sleep, that wooden bed,
 Which shall their coffin be, when dead!

The library, where tract and tome
 Not to feed priestly pride are there,
 To hymn the conquering march of Rome,
 Nor yet to amuse, as ours are!
 They paint of souls the inner strife,
 Their drops of blood, their death in life.

The garden, overgrown—yet mild,
 See, fragrant herbs are flowering there!
 Strong children of the Alpine wild
 Whose culture is the brethren's care;
 Of human tasks their only one,
 And cheerful works beneath the sun.

Those halls, too, destined to contain
 Each its own pilgrim-host of old,²
 From England, Germany, or Spain—
 All are before me! I behold
 The House, the Brotherhood austere!
 —And what am I, that I am here?

For rigorous teachers seized my youth,
 And purged its faith, and trimmed its fire,
 Showed me the high, white star of Truth,
 There bade me gaze, and there aspire.
 Even now their whispers pierce the gloom:
What dost thou in this living tomb?

Forgive me, masters of the mind!
 At whose behest I long ago
 So much unlearned, so much resigned—
 I come not here to be your foe!

²Carthusian monks on pilgrimage.

I seek these anchorites, not in ruth,
To curse and to deny your truth;

Not as their friend, or child, I speak!
But as, on some far northern strand,
Thinking of his own Gods, a Greek
In pity and mournful awe might stand
Before some fallen Runic stone—
For both were faiths, and both are gone.

Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born,
With nowhere yet to rest my head,
Like these, on earth I wait forlorn.
Their faith, my tears, the world deride—
I come to shed them at their side.

Oh, hide me in your gloom profound,
Ye solemn seats of holy pain!
Take me, cowed forms, and fence me round,
Till I possess my soul again;
Till free my thoughts before me roll,
Not chafed by hourly false control!

For the world cries your faith is now
But a dead time's exploded dream;
My melancholy, sciolists¹ say,
Is a passed mode, an outworn theme—
As if the world had ever had
A faith, or sciolists been sad!

Ah, if it *be* passed, take away,
At least, the restlessness, the pain;
Be man henceforth no more a prey
To these out-dated stings again!
The nobleness of grief is gone—
Ah, leave us not the fret alone!

But—if you cannot give us ease—
Last of the race of them who grieve
Here leave us to die out with these
Last of the people who believe!
Silent, while years engrave the brow;
Silent—the best are silent now.

Achilles ponders in his tent,²
The kings of modern thought are dumb;
Silent they are, though not content,
And wait to see the future come.
They have the grief men had of yore,
But they contend and cry no more.

¹Smatterers.

²*Iliad*, Bk. I.

Our fathers watered with their tears
This sea of time whereon we sail,
Their voices were in all men's ears
Who passed within their puissant hail.
Still the same ocean round us raves,
But we stand mute, and watch the waves.

For what availed it, all the noise
And outcry of the former men?—
Say, have their sons achieved more joys,
Say, is life lighter now than then?
The sufferers died, they left their pain—
The pangs which tortured them remain.

What helps it now, that Byron bore,
With haughty scorn which mocked the
smart,

Through Europe to the Ætolian shore³
The pageant of his bleeding heart?
That thousands counted every groan,
And Europe made his woe her own?

What boots it, Shelley! that the breeze
Carried thy lovely wail away,
Musical through Italian trees
Which fringe thy soft blue Spezzian bay?⁴
Inheritors of thy distress
Have restless hearts one throb the less?

Or are we easier, to have read,
O Obermann!⁵ the sad, stern page,
Which tells us how thou hidd'st thy head
From the fierce tempest of thine age
In the lone brakes of Fontainebleau,
Or chalets near the Alpine snow?

Ye slumber in your silent grave!—
The world, which for an idle day
Grace to your mood of sadness gave,
Long since hath flung her weeds away.
The eternal trifter breaks your spell;
But we—we learned your lore too well!

Years hence, perhaps, may dawn an age,
More fortunate, alas! than we,
Which without hardness will be sage,
And gay without frivolity.
Sons of the world, oh, speed those years;
But, while we wait, allow our tears!

³Grecian shore.

⁴Shelley's last days were spent on the shores of the Gulf of Spezzia, on the northwestern coast of Italy.

⁵Senancour, whose book is entitled *Obermann*.

Allow them! We admire with awe
 The exulting thunder of your race;
 You give the universe your law,
 You triumph over time and space!
 Your pride of life, your tireless powers,
 We laud them, but they are not ours.

We are like children reared in shade
 Beneath some old-world abbey wall,
 Forgotten in a forest-glade,
 And secret from the eyes of all.
 Deep, deep the greenwood round them waves,
 Their abbey, and its close¹ of graves!

But, where the road runs near the stream,
 Oft through the trees they catch a glance
 Of passing troops in the sun's beam—
 Pennon, and plume, and flashing lance!
 Forth to the world those soldiers fare,
 To life, to cities, and to war!

And through the wood, another way,
 Faint bugle-notes from far are borne,
 Where hunters gather, staghounds bay,
 Round some fair forest-lodge at morn.
 Gay dames are there, in sylvan green;
 Laughter and cries—those notes between!

¹Enclosed plot.

The banners flashing through the trees
 Make their blood dance and chain their eyes;
 That bugle-music on the breeze
 Arrests them with a charmed surprise.
 Banner by turns and bugle woo:
Ye shy recluses, follow too!

O children, what do ye reply?—
 "Action and pleasure, will ye roam
 Through these secluded dells to cry
 And call us?—but too late ye come!
 Too late for us your call ye blow,
 Whose bent was taken long ago.

"Long since we pace this shadowed nave;
 We watch those yellow tapers shine,
 Emblems of hope over the grave,
 In the high altar's depth divine;
 The organ carries to our ear
 Its accents of another sphere.

"Fenced early in this cloistral round
 Of reverie, of shade, of prayer,
 How should we grow in other ground?
 How can we flower in foreign air?
 —Pass, banners, pass, and bugles, cease;
 And leave our desert to its peace!"

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI (1828-1882)

Rossetti was the eldest son of Gabriele Rossetti and Mary Lavinia Polidori, and was born in London on 12 May, 1828. Gabriele Rossetti was a native of the Kingdom of Naples, where he had been Curator of Antiquities in the Naples Museum, but he had had to flee from that country because of his share in the insurrectionary movements of 1820 and 1821. He had come to England in 1824, where he was for many years Professor of Italian in King's College, London. The environment of his home early stimulated Dante Gabriel Rossetti's powers, and he was writing poetry at the age of five or six. At nine he began attending lectures at King's College, where he remained until he was fourteen. This was the extent of his formal education, though extensive reading done at home was of great importance in his development. When he left King's College in 1842 he determined that painting was to be his profession and for the next six years he studied drawing at Cary's Drawing Academy and in the antique class of the Royal Academy. In this work he did not make remarkable progress, partly because then, as later, he was impatient for great results and tended to neglect the slow and tiresome drudgery necessary for a thorough foundation in drawing. He also began in this period the writing of poetry, some of his translations from Dante and his contemporaries being made as early as 1845, and several of his most remarkable poems, notably *The Blessed Damozel*, being written about 1847. In 1848 Rossetti applied to Ford Madox Brown for instruction, and this proved a momentous step. Through Brown he was introduced to a group of young men who were feeling their way to a new movement in art, resolving to abandon the conventionalities inherited from the eighteenth century and to revive the detailed elaboration and mystical interpretation of nature that characterized early medieval art. The best known of these are Woolner, Holman Hunt, and Millais, and they formed themselves, with Brown, Rossetti, and others, into the so-called Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The literary manifesto of the group was the *Germ*, four numbers of which appeared in 1850 under the editorship of William Michael Rossetti. In this *The Blessed Damozel* was printed and *Hand and Soul*, the only imaginative work in prose which D. G. Rossetti ever completed. About this time Rossetti fell in love with Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, a milliner's assistant who was the daughter of a Sheffield cutler. He became engaged to her probably in 1851, and she served at this time and later as a model for many of his pictures, but Rossetti did not marry her until May, 1860, both because of his scanty means and because of her uncertain, delicate health. For several years Rossetti's income was increased by Ruskin, who not only defended the aims of the Pre-Raphaelite painters but made an arrangement, which lasted until after 1861, to purchase Rossetti's pictures. Ruskin also stood the expense of the publication of Rossetti's translations from the *Early Italian Poets* (in later editions entitled *Dante and His Circle*) in 1861. Another friend who was at this time useful to Rossetti was Sir Edward Burne-Jones, who introduced him to Swinburne, William Morris, and others, at Oxford.

When Rossetti married in 1860 it was obvious that his wife could not live long, because of the consumption which had attacked her. She died, however, even sooner than any one expected, in February, 1862, from an overdose of laudanum taken to relieve neuralgia. Rossetti characteristically expressed his grief by burying with her the manuscripts of his unpublished poems. And there they remained until the fall of 1869, when he consented to their disinterment. His *Collected Poems* were published in the following year and immediately secured for him a great reputation. The remainder of Rossetti's life, however, was a prolonged tragedy, owing to his addiction to the habit of taking chloral. This, in combination with his weak health, produced mental aberrations which made his life painful both to himself and to his friends. He continued at times, nevertheless, his work as a painter, and in the last years of his life wrote two of his greatest poems, the *White Ship* and the *King's Tragedy*. These and other poems were published under the title *Ballads and Sonnets* in 1881. In the following year Rossetti died at Birchington, near Margate, on 10 April.

Rossetti was, as Ruskin said, "the chief intellectual force in the establishment of the Modern Romantic School in England." This he was, alike in the fine arts and in poetry. In the latter his chief followers were William Morris and Swinburne. This school voiced a reaction in its own lesser, sensuous way from the materialism and ugliness of the growing industrial civilization of England, just as the earlier romantic writers of the beginning of the century had reacted against the skeptical rationalism of the eighteenth century.

"The wind is loud, but I hear him cry,
Sister Helen,

That Keith of Ewern's like to die."

"And he and thou, and thou and I,
Little brother."

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
And they and we, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Three days ago, on his marriage-morn,
Sister Helen,

He sickened, and lies since then forlorn."

"For bridegroom's side is the bride a thorn,
Little brother?"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Cold bridal cheer, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Three days and nights he has lain abed,
Sister Helen,

And he prays in torment to be dead."

"The thing may chance, if he have prayed,
Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
If he have prayed, between Hell and Heaven!)

"But he has not ceased to cry to-day,
Sister Helen,

That you should take your curse away."

"My prayer was heard,—he need but pray,
Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Shall God not hear, between Hell and Heaven?)

"But he says, till you take back your ban,
Sister Helen,

His soul would pass, yet never can."

"Nay then, shall I slay a living man,
Little brother?"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
A living soul, between Hell and Heaven!)

"But he calls for ever on your name,
Sister Helen,

And says that he melts before a flame."

"My heart for his pleasure fared the same,
Little brother."

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Fire at the heart, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Here's Keith of Westholm riding fast,
Sister Helen,

For I know the white plume on the blast."

"The hour, the sweet hour I forecast,
Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Is the hour sweet, between Hell and Heaven?)

"He stops to speak, and he stills his horse,
Sister Helen;

But his words are drowned in the wind's
course."

"Nay hear, nay hear, you must hear perforce,
Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
What word now heard, between Hell and Heaven?)

"Oh he says that Keith of Ewern's cry,
Sister Helen,

Is ever to see you ere he die."

"In all that his soul sees, there am I,
Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
The soul's one sight, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He sends a ring and a broken coin,¹
Sister Helen,

And bids you mind the banks of Boyne."

"What else he broke will he ever join,
Little brother?"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
No, never joined, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He yields you these and craves full fain,
Sister Helen,

You pardon him in his mortal pain."

"What else he took will he give again,
Little brother?"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Not twice to give, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He calls your name in an agony,
Sister Helen,

That even dead Love must weep to see."

"Hate, born of Love, is blind as he,
Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Love turned to hate, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Oh it's Keith of Keith now that rides fast,
Sister Helen,

For I know the white hair on the blast."

"The short short hour will soon be past,
Little Brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Will soon be past, between Hell and Heaven!)

¹The two had broken a coin, each keeping half as a pledge.

"He looks at me and he tries to speak,
Sister Helen,
But oh! his voice is sad and weak!"
"What here should the mighty Baron seek,
Little brother?"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Is this the end, between Hell and Heaven?)

"Oh his son still cries, if you forgive,
Sister Helen,
The body dies but the soul shall live."
"Fire shall forgive me as I forgive,
Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
As she forgives, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Oh he prays you, as his heart would rive,
Sister Helen,
To save his dear son's soul alive."
"Fire cannot slay it, it shall thrive,
Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Alas, alas, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He cries to you, kneeling in the road,
Sister Helen,
To go with him for the love of God!"
"The way is long to his son's abode,
Little brother."

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
The way is long, between Hell and Heaven!)

"A lady's here, by a dark steed brought,
Sister Helen,
So darkly clad, I saw her not."
"See her now or never see aught,
Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
What more to see, between Hell and Heaven?)

"Her hood falls back, and the moon shines fair,
Sister Helen,
On the Lady of Ewern's golden hair."
"Blest hour of my power and her despair,
Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Hour blest and banned, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Pale, pale her cheeks, that in pride did glow,
Sister Helen,
'Neath the bridal-wreath three days ago."
"One morn for pride and three days for woe,
Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Three days, three nights, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Her clasped hands stretch from her bending
head,

Sister Helen;
With the loud wind's wail her sobs are wed."
"What wedding-strains hath her bridal-bed,
Little brother?"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
What strain but death's, between Hell and Heaven!)

"She may not speak, she sinks in a swoon,
Sister Helen,—
She lifts her lips and gasps on the moon."
"Oh! might I but hear her soul's blithe tune,
Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Her woe's dumb cry, between Hell and Heaven!)

"They've caught her to Westholm's saddle-
bow,

Sister Helen,
And her moonlit hair gleams white in its
flow."

"Let it turn whiter than winter snow,
Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Woe-withered gold, between Hell and Heaven!)

"O Sister Helen, you heard the bell,
Sister Helen!
More loud than the vesper-chime it fell."
"No vesper-chime, but a dying knell,
Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
His dying knell, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Alas! but I fear the heavy sound,
Sister Helen;
Is it in the sky or in the ground?"
"Say, have they turned their horses round,
Little brother?"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
What would she more, between Hell and Heaven?)

"They have raised the old man from his knee,
Sister Helen,
And they ride in silence hastily."
"More fast the naked soul doth flee,
Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
The naked soul, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Flank to flank are the three steeds gone,
Sister Helen,
But the lady's dark steed goes alone."
"And lonely her bridegroom's soul hath flown,
Little brother."

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
The lonely ghost, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Oh the wind is sad in the iron chill,
Sister Helen,
And weary sad they look by the hill."
"But he and I are sadder still,
Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Most sad of all, between Hell and Heaven!)

"See, see, the wax has dropped from its place,
Sister Helen,
And the flames are winning up apace!"
"Yet here they burn but for a space,
Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Here for a space, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Ah! what white thing at the door has crossed,
Sister Helen,
Ah! what is this that sighs in the frost?"
"A soul that's lost as mine is lost,
Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Lost, lost, all lost, between Hell and Heaven!)

THE KING'S TRAGEDY¹

JAMES I OF SCOTS—20 FEBRUARY, 1437

I CATHERINE am a Douglas born,
A name to all Scots dear;
And Kate Barlass they've called me now
Through many a waning year.

This old arm's withered now. 'Twas once
Most deft 'mong maidens all
To rein the steed, to wing the shaft,
To smite the palm-play ball.

¹Tradition says that Catherine Douglas, in honor of her heroic act when she barred the door with her arm against the murderers of James I of Scots, received popularly the name of "Barlass." This name remains to her descendants, the Barlas family, in Scotland, who bear for their crest a broken arm. She married Alexander Lovell of Boulunnie.

In hall adown the close-linked dance
It has shone most white and fair,
It has been the rest for a true lord's head,
And many a sweet babe's nursing-bed,
And the bar to a King's chambére.

Aye, lasses, draw round Kate Barlass,
And hark with bated breath
How good King James, King Robert's son,
Was foully done to death.

Through all the days of his gallant youth
The princely James was pent,
By his friends at first and then by his foes,
In long imprisonment.

For the elder Prince, the kingdom's heir
By treason's murderous brood
Was slain; and the father quaked for the
child
With the royal mortal blood.

I' the Bass Rock fort, by his father's care,
Was his childhood's life assured;
And Henry the subtle Bolingbroke,²
Proud England's King, 'neath the southron
yoke
His youth for long years immured.

Yet in all things meet for a kingly man
Himself did he approve;
And the nightingale through his prison-wall
Taught him both lore and love.

For once, when the bird's song drew him close
To the opened window-pane,
In her bower beneath a lady stood,³
A light of life to his sorrowful mood,
Like a lily amid the rain.

A few stanzas from King James's lovely poem, known as *The King's Quair* [i.e., Book], are quoted in the course of this ballad [those printed in italics]. The writer must express regret for the necessity which has compelled him to shorten the ten-syllabled lines to eight syllables, in order that they might harmonize with the ballad meter (Rossetti's note).

King James was murdered in the Dominican monastery at Perth on the day named in the subtitle, and was buried in the Carthusian monastery ("Charterhouse") which he had founded in 1425. In the poem Rossetti merges the two monasteries into one.

²Henry IV.

³The Lady Jane Beaufort. James tells the story of his love for her—including its beginning as Rossetti describes it—in *The King's Quair*.

And for her sake, to the sweet bird's note,
 He framed a sweeter Song,
 More sweet than ever a poet's heart
 Gave yet to the English tongue.

She was a lady of royal blood;
 And when, past sorrow and teen,
 He stood where still through his crownless
 years
 His Scottish realm had been,
 At Scone were the happy lovers crowned,
 A heart-wed King and Queen.

But the bird may fall from the bough of
 youth,
 And song be turned to moan,
 And Love's storm-cloud be the shadow of
 Hate,
 When the tempest-waves of a troubled State
 Are beating against a throne.

Yet well they loved; and the god of Love,
 Whom well the King had sung,
 Might find on the earth no truer hearts
 His lowliest swains among.

From the days when first she rode abroad
 With Scottish maids in her train,
 I Catherine Douglas won the trust
 Of my mistress sweet Queen Jane.

And oft she sighed, "To be born a King!"
 And oft along the way
 When she saw the homely lovers pass
 She has said, "Alack the day!"

Years waned,—the loving and toiling years:
 Till England's wrong renewed
 Drove James, by outrage cast on his crown,
 To the open field of feud.

'Twas when the King and his host were met
 At the leaguer of Roxbro' hold,¹
 The Queen o' the sudden sought his camp
 With a tale of dread to be told.

And she showed him a secret letter writ
 That spoke of treasonous strife,
 And how a band of his noblest lords
 Were sworn to take his life.

"And it may be here or it may be there,
 In the camp or the court," she said:

¹The siege of Roxburgh Castle (1436).

"But for my sake come to your people's arms
 And guard your royal head."

Quoth he, "'Tis the fifteenth day of the siege,
 And the castle's nigh to yield."
 "O face your foes on your throne," she cried,
 "And show the power you wield;
 And under your Scottish people's love
 You shall sit as under your shield."

At the fair Queen's side I stood that day
 When he bade them raise the siege,
 And back to his Court he sped to know
 How the lords would meet their Liege.

But when he summoned his Parliamēt,
 The louring brows hung round,
 Like clouds that circle the mountain-head
 Ere the first low thunders sound.

For he had tamed the nobles' lust
 And curbed their power and pride,
 And reached out an arm to right the poor
 Through Scotland far and wide;
 And many a lordly wrong-doer
 By the headsman's axe had died.

'Twas then upspoke Sir Robert Græme,
 The bold o'ermastering man:—
 "O King, in the name of your Three Estates²
 I set you under their ban!

"For, as your lords made oath to you
 Of service and fealty,
 Even in like wise you pledged your oath
 Their faithful sire to be:—

"Yet all we here that are nobly sprung
 Have mourned dear kith and kin
 Since first for the Scottish Barons' curse
 Did your bloody rule begin."

With that he laid his hands on his King:—
 "Is this not so, my lords?"
 But of all who had sworn to league with him
 Not one spake back to his words.

Quoth the King:—"Thou speak'st but for
 one Estate,
 Nor doth it avow thy gage.
 Let my liege lords hale this traitor hence!"
 The Græme fired dark with rage:
 "Who works for lesser men than himself
 He earns but a witless wage!"

²Peers, clergy, and commoners.

But soon from the dungeon where he lay
 He won by privy plots,
 And forth he fled with a price on his head
 To the country of the Wild Scots.

And word there came from Sir Robert Græme
 To the King at Edinbro':—
 "No Lige of mine thou art; but I see
 From this day forth alone in thee
 God's creature, my mortal foe.

"Through thee are my wife and children lost,
 My heritage and lands;
 And when my God shall show me a way,
 Thyself my mortal foe will I slay
 With these my proper¹ hands."

Against the coming of Christmastide
 That year the King bade call
 I' the Black Friars' Charterhouse of Perth
 A solemn festival.

And we of his household rode with him
 In a close-ranked company;
 But not till the sun had sunk from his throne
 Did we reach the Scottish Sea.²

That eve was clenched for a boding storm,
 'Neath a toilsome moon half seen;
 The cloud stooped low and the surf rose high;
 And where there was a line of the sky,
 Wild wings loomed dark between.

And on a rock of the black beach-side,
 By the veiled moon dimly lit,
 There was something seemed to heave with
 life
 As the King drew nigh to it.

And was it only the tossing furze
 Or brake of the waste sea-wold?
 Or was it an eagle bent to the blast?
 When near we came, we knew it at last
 For a woman tattered and old.

But it seemed as though by a fire within
 Her writhen limbs were wrung;
 And as soon as the King was close to her,
 She stood up gaunt and strong.

'Twas then the moon sailed clear of the rack³
 On high in her hollow dome;

And still as aloft with hoary crest
 Each clamorous wave rang home,
 Like fire in snow the moonlight blazed
 Amid the champing foam.

And the woman held his eyes with her eyes:—
 "O King, thou art come at last,
 But thy wraith has haunted the Scottish Sea
 To my sight for four years past.

"Four years it is since first I met,
 'Twixt the Duchray and the Dhu,⁴
 A shape whose feet clung close in a shroud,
 And that shape for thine I knew.

"A year again, and on Inchkeith Isle⁵
 I saw thee pass in the breeze,
 With the cerecloth risen above thy feet
 And wound about thy knees.

"And yet a year, in the Links of Forth,⁶
 As a wanderer without rest,
 Thou cam'st with both thine arms i' the
 shroud
 That clung high up thy breast.

"And in this hour I find thee here,
 And well mine eyes may note
 That the winding-sheet hath passed thy
 breast
 And risen around thy throat.

"And when I meet thee again, O King,
 That of death hast such sore drouth,—
 Except thou turn again on this shore,—
 The winding-sheet shall have moved once
 more
 And covered thine eyes and mouth.

"O King, whom poor men bless for their King,
 Of thy fate be not so fain;
 But these my words for God's message take,
 And turn thy steed, O King, for her sake
 Who rides beside thy rein!"

While the woman spoke, the King's horse
 reared
 As if it would breast the sea,
 And the Queen turned pale as she heard on
 the gale
 The voice die dolorously.

¹*I.e.*, in Perthshire. ⁴In the Firth of Forth.

⁵The ground along the river's winding course.

¹My own. ²To set sail for Perth. ³Driving clouds.

When the woman ceased, the steed was still,
But the King gazed on her yet,
And in silence save for the wail of the sea
His eyes and her eyes met.

At last he said:—"God's ways are His own;
Man is but shadow and dust.
Last night I prayed by His altar-stone;
To-night I wend to the Feast of His Son;
And in Him I set my trust.

"I have held my people in sacred charge,
And have not feared the sting
Of proud men's hate,—to His will resigned
Who has but one same death for a hind¹
And one same death for a King.

"And if God in His wisdom have brought
close
The day when I must die,
That day by water or fire or air
My feet shall fall in the destined snare
Wherever my road may lie.

"What man can say but the Fiend hath set
Thy sorcery on my path,
My heart with the fear of death to fill,
And turn me against God's very will
To sink in His burning wrath?"

The woman stood as the train rode past,
And moved nor limb nor eye;
And when we were shipped, we saw her there
Still standing against the sky.

As the ship made way, the moon once more
Sank slow in her rising pall;
And I thought of the shrouded wraith of the
King,
And I said, "The Heavens know all."

And now, ye lasses, must ye hear
How my name is Kate Barlass:—
But a little thing, when all the tale
Is told of the weary mass
Of crime and woe which in Scotland's realm
God's will let come to pass.

'Twas in the Charterhouse of Perth
That the King and all his Court
Were met, the Christmas Feast being done,
For solace and disport.

'Twas a wind-wild eve in February,
And against the casement-pane
The branches smote like summoning hands
And muttered the driving rain.

And when the wind swooped over the lift
And made the whole heaven frown,
It seemed a grip was laid on the walls
To tug the housetop down.

And the Queen was there, more stately fair
Than a lily in garden set;
And the King was loath to stir from her side
For as on the day when she was his bride,
Even so he loved her yet.

And the Earl of Athole, the King's false
friend,
Sat with him at the board;
And Robert Stuart the chamberlain
Who had sold his sovereign Lord.

Yet the traitor Christopher Chaumber there
Would fain have told him all,
And vainly four times that night he strove
To reach the King through the hall.

But the wine is bright at the goblet's brim
Though the poison lurk beneath;
And the apples still are red on the tree
Within whose shade may the adder be
That shall turn thy life to death.

There was a knight of the King's fast friend
Whom he called the King of Love;
And to such bright cheer and courtesy
That name might best behave.

And the King and Queen both loved him well
For his gentle knightliness;
And with him the King, as that eve wore on
Was playing at the chess.

And the King said (for he thought to jest
And soothe the Queen thereby):—
"In a book 'tis writ that this same year
A King shall in Scotland die.

"And I have pondered the matter o'er,
And this have I found, Sir Hugh,—
There are but two Kings on Scottish ground
And those Kings are I and you.

¹Farm servant.

²Sky.

"And I have a wife and a newborn heir,
And you are yourself alone;
So stand you stark at my side with me
To guard our double throne.

"For here sit I and my wife and child,
As well your heart shall approve,
In full surrender and soothfastness,
Beneath your Kingdom of Love."

And the Knight laughed, and the Queen too
smiled;
But I knew her heavy thought,
And I strove to find in the good King's jest
What cheer might thence be wrought.

And I said, "My Liege, for the Queen's dear
love

Now sing the song that of old
You made, when a captive Prince you lay,
And the nightingale sang sweet on the spray,¹
In Windsor's castle-hold."

Then he smiled the smile I knew so well
When he thought to please the Queen;
The smile which under all bitter frowns
Of fate that rose between
For ever dwelt at the poet's heart
Like the bird of love unseen.

And he kissed her hand and took his harp,
And the music sweetly rang;
And when the song burst forth, it seemed
"Twas the nightingale that sang.

*"Worship, ye lovers, on this May:
Of bliss your kalends² are begun:
Sing with us, Away, Winter, away!
Come, Summer, the sweet season and sun!
Awake for shame,—your heaven is won,—
And amorously your heads lift all:
Thank Love, that you to his grace doth call!"*

But when he bent to the Queen, and sang
The speech whose praise was hers,
It seemed his voice was the voice of the
Spring
And the voice of the bygone years.

*"The fairest and the freshest flower
That ever I saw before that hour,
The which o' the sudden made to start
The blood of my body to my heart.*

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¹Branch, ²First days.

*Ah sweet, are ye a worldly creature
Or heavenly thing in form of nature?"*

And the song was long, and richly stored
With wonder and beauteous things;
And the harp was tuned to every change
Of minstrel ministerings;
But when he spoke of the Queen at the last,
Its strings were his own heart-strings.

*"Unworthy but only of her grace,
Upon Love's rock that's easy and sure,
In guerdon of all my love's space
She took me her humble creature.
Thus fell my blissful adventure³
In youth of love that from day to day
Flowereth aye new, and further I say.*

*"To reckon all the circumstance
As it happed when lessen gan my sore,
Of my rancor and woeful chance,
It were too long,—I have done therefor.
And of this flower I say no more,
But unto my help her heart hath tended
And even from death her man defended."*

"Aye, even from death," to myself I said;
For I thought of the day when she
Had borne him the news, at Roxbro' siege,
Of the fell confederacy.

But Death even then took aim as he sang
With an arrow deadly bright;
And the grinning skull lurked grimly aloof,
And the wings were spread far over the roof
More dark than the winter night.

Yet truly along the amorous song
Of Love's high pomp and state,
There were words of Fortune's trackless
doom
And the dreadful face of Fate.

And oft have I heard again in dreams
The voice of dire appeal
In which the King then sang of the pit
That is under Fortune's wheel.

*"And under the wheel beheld I there
An ugly Pit as deep as hell,
That to behold I quaked for fear:
And this I heard, that who therein fell
Came no more up, tidings to tell;*

³Chance.

*Whereat, astound of the fearful sight,
I wist not what to do for fright."*

And oft has my thought called up again
These words of the changeful song:—
"*Wist thou thy pain and thy travail
To come, well might'st thou weep and wail!*"
And our wail, O God! is long.

But the song's end was all of his love;
And well his heart was graced
With her smiling lips and her tear-bright eyes
As his arm went round her waist.

And on the swell of her long fair throat
Close clung the necklet-chain
As he bent her pearl-tired head aside,
And in the warmth of his love and pride
He kissed her lips full fain.

And her true face was a rosy red,
The very red of the rose
That, couched on the happy garden-bed,
In the summer sunlight glows.

And all the wondrous things of love
That sang so sweet through the song
Were in the look that met in their eyes,
And the look was deep and long.

'Twas then a knock came at the outer gate,
And the usher sought the King.
"The woman you met by the Scottish Sea,
My Liege, would tell you a thing;
And she says that her present need for speech
Will bear no gainsaying."

And the King said: "The hour is late;
To-morrow will serve, I ween."
Then he charged the usher strictly, and said:
"No word of this to the Queen."

But the usher came again to the King.
"Shall I call her back?" quoth he:
"For as she went on her way, she cried,
'Woe! Woe! then the thing must be!'"

And the King paused, but he did not speak.
Then he called for the Voidee-cup:¹
And as we heard the twelfth hour strike,
There by true lips and false lips alike
Was the draught of trust drained up.

So with reverence meet to King and Queen
To bed went all from the board;
And the last to leave of the courtly train
Was Robert Stuart the chamberlain
Who had sold his sovereign lord.

And all the locks of the chamber-door
Had the traitor riven and brast;²
And that Fate might win sure way from afar,
He had drawn out every bolt and bar
That made the entrance fast.

And now at midnight he stole his way
To the moat of the outer wall,
And laid strong hurdles closely across
Where the traitors' tread should fall.

But we that were the Queen's bower-maids
Alone were left behind;
And with heed we drew the curtains close
Against the winter wind.

And now that all was still through the hall,
More clearly we heard the rain
That clamored ever against the glass
And the boughs that beat on the pane.

But the fire was bright in the ingle-nook,
And through empty space around
The shadows cast on the arrased wall
'Mid the pictured kings stood sudden and tall
Like specters sprung from the ground.

And the bed was dight³ in a deep alcove;
And as he stood by the fire
The King was still in talk with the Queen
While he doffed his goodly attire.

And the song had brought the image back
Of many a bygone year;
And many a loving word they said
With hand in hand and head laid to head;
And none of us went anear.

But Love was weeping outside the house,
A child in the piteous rain;
And as he watched the arrow of Death,
He wailed for his own shafts close in the
sheath
That never should fly again.

¹Broken and burst.

²Made ready.

³Spiced wine drunk at bedtime.

And now beneath the window arose
A wild voice suddenly:
And the King reared straight, but the Queen
fell back

As for bitter dule to dree;¹
And all of us knew the woman's voice
Who spoke by the Scottish Sea.

"O King," she cried, "in an evil hour
They drove me from thy gate;
And yet my voice must rise to thine ears;
But alas! it comes too late!

"Last night at mid-watch, by Aberdour,
When the moon was dead in the skies,
O King, in a death-light of thine own
I saw thy shape arise.

"And in full season, as erst I said,
The doom had gained its growth;
And the shroud had risen above thy neck
And covered thine eyes and mouth.

"And no moon woke, but the pale dawn
broke,
And still thy soul stood there;
And I thought its silence cried to my soul
As the first rays crowned its hair.

"Since then have I journeyed fast and fain
In very despite of Fate,
Lest Hope might still be found in God's will:
But they drove me from thy gate.

"For every man on God's ground, O King,
His death grows up from his birth
In a shadow-plant perpetually;
And thine towers high, a black yew-tree,
O'er the Charterhouse of Perth!"

That room was built far out from the house;
And none but we in the room
Might hear the voice that rose beneath,
Nor the tread of the coming doom.

For now there came a torchlight-glare,
And a clang of arms there came;
And not a soul in that space but thought
Of the foe Sir Robert Græme.

Yea, from the country of the Wild Scots,
O'er mountain, valley, and glen,
He had brought with him in murderous league
Three hundred armed men.

¹As if to endure a bitter grief.

The King knew all in an instant's flash;
And like a King did he stand;
But there was no armor in all the room,
Nor weapon lay to his hand.

And all we women flew to the door
And thought to have made it fast;
But the bolts were gone and the bars were
gone
And the locks were riven and brast.

And he caught the pale pale Queen in his
arms
As the iron footsteps fell,—
Then loosed her, standing alone, and said,
"Our bliss was our farewell!"

And 'twixt his lips he murmured a prayer,
And he crossed his brow and breast;
And proudly in royal hardihood
Even so with folded arms he stood,—
The prize of the bloody quest.

Then on me leaped the Queen like a deer:—
"O Catherine, help!" she cried.
And low at his feet we clasped his knees
Together side by side.
"Oh! even a King, for his people's sake,
From treasonous death must hide!"

"For *her* sake most!" I cried, and I marked
The pang that my words could wring.
And the iron tongs from the chimney-nook
I snatched and held to the King:—
"Wrench up the plank! and the vault be-
neath
Shall yield safe harboring."

With brows low-bent, from my eager hand
The heavy heft² did he take;
And the plank at his feet he wrenched and
tore;
And as he frowned through the open floor,
Again I said, "For her sake!"

Then he cried to the Queen, "God's will be
done!"

For her hands were clasped in prayer.
And down he sprang to the inner crypt;
And straight we closed the plank he had
ripped
And toiled to smooth it fair.

²Handle.

(Alas! in that vault a gap once was
 Wherethro' the King might have fled:
 But three days since close-walled had it been
 By his will; for the ball would roll therein
 When without at the palm he played.)

Then the Queen cried, "Catherine, keep the
 door,
 And I to this will suffice!"
 At her word I rose all dazed to my feet,
 And my heart was fire and ice.

And louder ever the voices grew,
 And the tramp of men in mail;
 Until to my brain it seemed to be
 As though I tossed on a ship at sea
 In the teeth of a crashing gale.

Then back I flew to the rest; and hard
 We strove with sinews knit
 To force the table against the door;
 But we might not compass it.

Then my wild gaze sped far down the hall
 To the place of the hearthstone-sill;
 And the Queen bent ever above the floor,
 For the plank was rising still.

And now the rush was heard on the stair,
 And "God, what help?" was our cry.
 And was I frenzied or was I bold?
 I looked at each empty stanchion-hold,
 And no bar but my arm had I!

Like iron felt my arm, as through
 The staple I made it pass:—
 Alack! it was flesh and bone—no more!
 'Twas Catherine Douglas sprang to the door,
 But I fell back Kate Barlass.

With that they all thronged into the hall,
 Half dim to my failing ken;
 And the space that was but a void before
 Was a crowd of wrathful men.

Behind the door I had fall'n and lay,
 Yet my sense was wildly aware,
 And for all the pain of my shattered arm
 I never fainted there.

Even as I fell, my eyes were cast
 Where the King leaped down to the pit;
 And lo! the plank was smooth in its place,
 And the Queen stood far from it.

And under the litters and through the bed
 And within the presses all
 The traitors sought for the King, and pierced
 The arras around the wall.

And through the chamber they ramped and
 stormed
 Like lions loose in the lair,
 And scarce could trust to their very eyes,—
 For behold! no King was there.

Then one of them seized the Queen, and
 cried,—
 "Now tell us, where is thy lord?"
 And he held the sharp point over her heart:
 She drooped not her eyes nor did she start,
 But she answered never a word.

Then the sword half pierced the true true
 breast:
 But it was the Græme's own son
 Cried, "This is a woman,—we seek a man!"
 And away from her girdle zone
 He struck the point of the murderous steel;
 And that foul deed was not done.

And forth flowed all the throng like a sea
 And 'twas empty space once more;
 And my eyes sought out the wounded Queen
 As I lay behind the door.

And I said: "Dear Lady, leave me here,
 For I cannot help you now;
 But fly while you may, and none shall reck
 Of my place here lying low."

And she said, "My Catherine, God help
 thee!"
 Then she looked to the distant floor,
 And clasping her hands, "O God help *him*,"
 She sobbed, "for we can no more!"

But God He knows what help may mean,
 If it mean to live or to die;
 And what sore sorrow and mighty moan
 On earth it may cost ere yet a throne
 Be filled in His house on high.

And now the ladies fled with the Queen;
 And through the open door
 The night-wind wailed round the empty room
 And the rushes shook on the floor.

And the bed drooped low in the dark recess
 Whence the arras was rent away;
 And the firelight still shone over the space
 Where our hidden secret lay.

And the rain had ceased, and the moonbeams
 lit
 The window high in the wall,—
 Bright beams that on the plank that I knew
 Through the painted pane did fall,
 And gleamed with the splendor of Scotland's
 crown
 And shield armorial.

But then a great wind swept up the skies
 And the climbing moon fell back;
 And the royal blazon fled from the floor,
 And nought remained on its track;
 And high in the darkened window-pane
 The shield and the crown were black.

And what I say next I partly saw
 And partly I heard in sooth,
 And partly since from the murderers' lips
 The torture wrung the truth.

For now again came the arméd tread,
 And fast through the hall it fell;
 But the throng was less; and ere I saw,
 By the voice without I could tell
 That Robert Stuart had come with them,
 Who knew that chamber well.

And over the space the Græme strode dark
 With his mantle round him flung;
 And in his eye was a flaming light
 But not a word on his tongue.

And Stuart held a torch to the floor,
 And he found the thing he sought;
 And they slashed the plank away with their
 swords;
 And O God! I fainted not!

And the traitor held his torch in the gap,
 All smoking and smoldering;
 And through the vapor and fire, beneath
 In the dark crypt's narrow ring,
 With a shout that pealed to the room's high
 roof
 They saw their naked King.

Half naked he stood, but stood as one
 Who yet could do and dare:

With the crown, the King was stripped
 away,—
 The Knight was 'reft of his battle-array,—
 But still the Man was there.

From the rout then stepped a villain forth,—
 Sir John Hall was his name;
 With a knife unsheathed he leaped to the
 vault
 Beneath the torchlight-flame.

Of his person and stature was the King
 A man right manly strong,
 And mightily by the shoulder-blades
 His foe to his feet he flung.

Then the traitor's brother, Sir Thomas Hall,
 Sprang down to work his worst;
 And the King caught the second man by the
 neck
 And flung him above the first.

And he smote and trampled them under him;
 And a long month thence they bare
 All black their throats with the grip of his
 hands
 When the hangman's hand came there.

And sore he strove to have had their knives,
 But the sharp blades gashed his hands.
 Oh James! so armed, thou hadst battled
 there
 Till help had come of thy bands;
 And oh! once more thou hadst held our
 throne
 And ruled thy Scottish lands!

But while the King o'er his foes still raged
 With a heart that nought could tame,
 Another man sprang down to the crypt;
 And with his sword in his hand hard-gripped,
 There stood Sir Robert Græme.

(Now shame on the recreant traitor's heart
 Who durst not face his King
 Till the body unarmed was wearied out
 With two-fold combating!

Ah! well might the people sing and say,
 As oft ye have heard aright:—
 "O Robert Græme, O Robert Græme,
 Who slew our King, God give thee shame!"
 For he slew him not as a knight.)

And the naked King turned round at bay,
 But his strength had passed the goal,
 And he could but gasp:—"Mine hour is
 come;
 But oh! to succor thine own soul's doom,
 Let a priest now shrive my soul!"

And the traitor looked on the King's spent
 strength,
 And said:—"Have I kept my word?—
 Yea, King, the mortal pledge that I gave?
 No black friar's shrift thy soul shall have,
 But the shrift of this red sword!"

With that he smote his King through the
 breast;
 And all they three in that pen
 Fell on him and stabbed and stabbed him
 there
 Like merciless murderous men.

Yet seemed it now that Sir Robert Græme,
 Ere the King's last breath was o'er,
 Turned sick at heart with the deadly sight
 And would have done no more.

But a cry came from the troop above:—
 "If him thou dost not slay,
 The price of his life that thou dost spare
 Thy forfeit life shall pay!"

O God! what more did I hear or see,
 Or how should I tell the rest?
 But there at length our King lay slain
 With sixteen wounds in his breast.

O God! and now did a bell boom forth,
 And the murderers turned and fled;—
 Too late, too late, O God, did it sound!—
 And I heard the true men mustering round,
 And the cries and the coming tread.

But ere they came, to the black death-gap
 Somewise did I creep and steal;
 And lo! or ever I swooned away,
 Through the dusk I saw where the white
 face lay
 In the Pit of Fortune's Wheel.

And now, ye Scottish maids who have heard
 Dread things of the days grown old,—
 Even at the last, of true Queen Jane
 May somewhat yet be told,
 And how she dealt for her dear lord's sake
 Dire vengeance manifold.

'Twas in the Charterhouse of Perth,
 In the fair-lit Death-chapelle,
 That the slain King's corpse on bier was
 laid
 With chaunt and requiem-knell.

And all with royal wealth of balm
 Was the body purified;
 And none could trace on the brow and lip
 The death that he had died.

In his robes of state he lay asleep
 With orb and scepter in hand;
 And by the crown he wore on his throne
 Was his kingly forehead spanned.

And, girls, 'twas a sweet sad thing to see
 How the curling golden hair,
 As in the day of the poet's youth,
 From the King's crown clustered there.

And if all had come to pass in the brain
 That throbbed beneath those curls,
 Then Scots had said in the days to come
 That this their soil was a different home
 And a different Scotland, girls!

And the Queen sat by him night and day
 And oft she knelt in prayer,
 All wan and pale in the widow's veil
 That shrouded her shining hair.

And I had got good help of my hurt:
 And only to me some sign
 She made; and save the priests that were
 there,
 No face would she see but mine.

And the month of March wore on apace;
 And now fresh couriers fared
 Still from the country of the Wild Scots
 With news of the traitors snared.

And still as I told her day by day,
 Her pallor changed to sight,
 And the frost grew to a furnace-flame
 That burned her visage white.

And evermore as I brought her word,
 She bent to her dead King James,
 And in the cold ear with fire-drawn breath
 She spoke the traitors' names.

But when the name of Sir Robert Græme
Was the one she had to give,
I ran to hold her up from the floor;
For the froth was on her lips, and sore
I feared that she could not live.

And the month of March wore nigh to its
end,
And still was the death-pall spread;
For she would not bury her slaughtered lord
Till his slayers all were dead.

And now of their dooms dread tidings came,
And of torments fierce and dire;
And nought she spake,—she had ceased to
speak,—
But her eyes were a soul on fire.

But when I told her the bitter end
Of the stern and just award,
She leaned o'er the bier, and thrice three
times
She kissed the lips of her lord.

And then she said,—“My King, they are
dead!”
And she knelt on the chapel-floor,
And whispered low with a strange proud
smile,—
“James, James, they suffered more!”

Last she stood up to her queenly height,
But she shook like an autumn leaf,
As though the fire wherein she burned
Then left her body, and all were turned
To winter of life-long grief.

And “O James!” she said,—“My James!”
she said,—
“Alas for the woeful thing,
That a poet true and a friend of man,
In desperate days of bale and ban,¹
Should needs be born a King!”

THE HOUSE OF LIFE²

A SONNET-SEQUENCE

A SONNET is a moment's monument,—
Memorial from the Soul's eternity

¹Wickedness and enmity.

²Published in its final form in 1881. Rossetti began writing the sonnets as early as 1848. They were chiefly inspired by Elizabeth Siddal. The title of the sequence was drawn from the astrological division of the heavens

To one dead deathless hour. Look that it
be,
Whether for lustral rite or dire portent,
Of its own arduous fullness reverent:
Carve it in ivory or in ebony,
As Day or Night may rule; and let Time see
Its flowering crest imperaled and orient.

A Sonnet is a coin: its face reveals
The soul,—its converse, to what Power
'tis due:—
Whether for tribute to the august appeals
Of Life, or dower in Love's high retinue,
It serve; or, 'mid the dark wharf's cavernous
breath,
In Charon's palm it pay the toll to Death.

PART I—YOUTH AND CHANGE

4. LOVESIGHT

WHEN do I see thee most, beloved one?
When in the light the spirits of mine eyes
Before thy face, their altar, solemnize
The worship of that Love through thee made
known?
Or when in the dusk hours (we two alone),
Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies
Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage lies,
And my soul only sees thy soul its own?

O love, my love! if I no more should see
Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,
Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,—
How then should sound upon Life's darken-
ing slope
The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of
Hope,
The wind of Death's imperishable wing?

5. HEART'S HOPE

BY WHAT word's power, the key of paths
untrod,
Shall I the difficult deeps of Love explore,
Till parted waves of Song yield up the
shore
Even as that sea which Israel crossed dry-
shod?³

For lo! in some poor rhythmic period,
Lady, I fain would tell how evermore
Thy soul I know not from thy body, nor
Thee from myself, neither our love from God.

into twelve “houses,” the first and greatest of which was the “house of life.”

³Exodus, xiv, 15-31.

Yea, in God's name, and Love's, and thine,
would I

Draw from one loving heart such evidence
As to all hearts all things shall signify;
Tender as dawn's first hill-fire, and intense
As instantaneous penetrating sense,
In Spring's birth-hour, of other Springs gone
by.

19. SILENT NOON

YOUR hands lie open in the long fresh grass,—
The finger-points look through like rosy
blooms:
Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams
and glooms
'Neath billowing skies that scatter and
amass.
All round our nest, far as the eye can pass,
Are golden kingcup-fields with silver edge
Where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn-
hedge.
'Tis visible silence, still as the hour-glass.

Deep in the sun-searched growths the
dragon-fly
Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the
sky;—
So this winged hour is dropped to us from
above.
Oh! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless
dower,
This close-companioned inarticulate hour
When twofold silence was the song of love.

21. LOVE-SWEETNESS

SWEET dimness of her loosened hair's
downfall
About thy face; her sweet hands round
thy head
In gracious fostering union garlanded;
Her tremulous smiles; her glances' sweet
recall
Of love; her murmuring sighs memorial;
Her mouth's culled sweetness by thy
kisses shed
On cheeks and neck and eyelids, and so led
Back to her mouth which answers there for
all:—

What sweeter than these things, except the
thing
In lacking which all these would lose their
sweet:—

The confident heart's still fervor: the
swift beat
And soft subsidence of the spirit's wing,
Then when it feels, in cloud-girt wayfaring,
The breath of kindred plumes against
its feet?

22. HEART'S HAVEN

SOMETIMES she is a child within mine arms,
Cowering beneath dark wings that love
must chase,—
With still tears showering and averted
face,
Inexplicably filled with faint alarms:
And oft from mine own spirit's hurtling
harms
I crave the refuge of her deep embrace,—
Against all ills the fortified strong place
And sweet reserve of sovereign counter-
charms.

And Love, our light at night and shade at
noon,
Lulls us to rest with songs, and turns away
All shafts of shelterless tumultuous day.
Like the moon's growth, his face gleams
through his tune;
And as soft waters warble to the moon,
Our answering spirits chime one roundelay.

25. WINGED HOURS

EACH hour until we meet is as a bird
That wings from far his gradual way along
The rustling covert of my soul,—his song
Still loudlier trilled through leaves more
deeply stirred:
But at the hour of meeting, a clear word
Is every note he sings, in Love's own
tongue;
Yet, Love, thou know'st the sweet strain
suffers wrong,
Full oft through our contending joys un-
heard.

What of that hour at last, when for her sake
No wing may fly to me nor song may flow
When, wandering round my life unleaved
I know
The bloodied feathers scattered in the brake,
And think how she, far from me, with like
eyes
Sees through the untuneful bough the
wingless skies?

¹Thicket.

26. MID-RAPTURE

THOU lovely and beloved, thou my love;
 Whose kiss seems still the first; whose
 summoning eyes,
 Even now, as for our love-world's new
 sunrise,
 Shed very dawn; whose voice, attuned above
 All modulation of the deep-bowered dove,
 Is like a hand laid softly on the soul;
 Whose hand is like a sweet voice to control
 Those worn tired brows it hath the keeping
 of:—

What word can answer to thy word,—what
 gaze
 To thine, which now absorbs within its
 sphere
 My worshiping face, till I am mirrored
 there
 Light-circled in a heaven of deep-drawn rays?
 What clasp, what kiss mine inmost heart
 can prove,
 O lovely and beloved, O my love?

27. HEART'S COMPASS

SOMETIMES thou seem'st not as thyself alone,
 But as the meaning of all things that are;
 A breathless wonder, shadowing forth afar
 Some heavenly solstice hushed and halcyon;¹
 Whose unstirred lips are music's visible tone;
 Whose eyes the sun-gate of the soul unbar,
 Being of its furthest fires oracular;—
 The evident heart of all life sown and mown.

Even such Love is; and is not thy name
 Love?

Yea, by thy hand the Love-god rends apart
 All gathering clouds of Night's ambiguous
 art;

Flings them far down, and sets thine eyes
 above;

And simply, as some gage of flower or glove,
 Stakes with a smile the world against thy
 heart.

34. THE DARK GLASS

NOT I myself know all my love for thee:
 How should I reach so far, who cannot
 weigh

To-morrow's dower by gage of yesterday?
 Shall birth and death, and all dark names
 that be

As doors and windows bared to some loud sea
 Lash deaf mine ears and blind my face
 with spray;
 And shall my sense pierce love,—the last
 relay
 And ultimate outpost of eternity?

Lo! what am I to Love, the lord of all?
 One murmuring shell he gathers from the
 sand,—
 One little heart-flame sheltered in his hand.
 Yet through thine eyes he grants me clearest
 call
 And veriest touch of powers primordial
 That any hour-girt life may understand.

36. LIFE-IN-LOVE

NOT in thy body is thy life at all,
 But in this lady's lips and hands and eyes;
 Through these she yields thee life that
 vivifies
 What else were sorrow's servant and death's
 thrall.
 Look on thyself without her, and recall
 The waste remembrance and forlorn sur-
 mise
 That lived but in a dead-drawn breath of
 sighs
 O'er vanished hours and hours eventual.

Even so much life hath the poor tress of hair
 Which, stored apart, is all love hath to
 show
 For heart-beats and for fire-heats long
 ago;
 Even so much life endures unknown, ever
 where,
 'Mid change the changeless night environeth,
 Lies all that golden hair undimmed in death.

55. STILLBORN LOVE

THE hour which might have been yet might
 not be,
 Which man's and woman's heart conceived
 and bore
 Yet whereof life was barren,—on what
 shore
 Bides it the breaking of Time's weary sea?
 Bondchild of all consummate joys set free,
 It somewhere sighs and serves, and mute
 before
 The house of Love, hears through the
 echoing door
 His hours elect in choral consonancy.

¹Calm.

But lo! what wedded souls now hand in hand
 Together tread at last the immortal strand
 With eyes where burning memory lights
 love home?

Lo! how the little outcast hour has turned
 And leaped to them and in their faces
 yearned:—

“I am your child: O Parents, ye have
 come!”

56, 57, 58. TRUE WOMAN

I. HERSELF

To BE a sweetness more desired than Spring;
 A bodily beauty more acceptable
 Than the wild rose-tree's arch that crowns
 the fell;¹

To be an essence more environing²
 Than wine's drained juice; a music ravishing
 More than the passionate pulse of Philo-
 mel;³—

To be all this 'neath one soft bosom's swell
 That is the flower of life:—how strange a
 thing!

How strange a thing to be what Man can
 know

But as a sacred secret! Heaven's own
 screen

Hides her soul's purest depth and loveliest
 glow;

Closely withheld, as all things most un-
 seen,—

The wave-bowered pearl,—the heart-
 shaped seal of green

That flecks the snowdrop underneath the
 snow.

II. HER LOVE

SHE loves him; for her infinite soul is Love,
 And he her lodestar. Passion in her is
 A glass facing his fire, where the bright bliss
 Is mirrored, and the heat returned. Yet move
 That glass, a stranger's amorous flame to
 prove,

And it shall turn, by instant contraries,
 Ice to the moon; while her pure fire to his
 For whom it burns, clings close i' the heart's
 alcove.

Lo! they are one. With wifely breast to
 breast

And circling arms, she welcomes all
 command

Of love,—her soul to answering ardors
 fanned:

Yet as morn springs or twilight sinks to rest,
 Ah! who shall say she deems not loveliest
 The hour of sisterly sweet hand-in-hand?

III. HER HEAVEN

IF to grow old in Heaven is to grow young,
 (As the Seer⁴ saw and said), then blest were
 he

With youth for evermore, whose heaven
 should be

True Woman, she whom these weak notes
 have sung.

Here and hereafter,—choir-strains of her
 tongue,—

Sky-spaces of her eyes,—sweet signs that
 flee

About her soul's immediate sanctuary,—
 Were Paradise all uttermost worlds among.

The sunrise blooms and withers on the hill
 Like any hillflower; and the noblest troth
 Dies here to dust. Yet shall Heaven's
 promise clothe

Even yet those lovers who have cherished still
 This test for love:—in every kiss sealed fast
 To feel the first kiss and forebode the last.

PART II—CHANGE AND FATE

63. INCLUSIVENESS

THE changing guests, each in a different
 mood,

Sit at the roadside table and arise:

And every life among them in likewise
 Is a soul's board set daily with new food.

What man has bent o'er his son's sleep, to
 brood

How that face shall watch his when cold
 it lies?—

Or thought, as his own mother kissed his
 eyes,

Of what her kiss was when his father wooed?

May not this ancient room thou sitt'st in
 dwell

In separate living souls for joy or pain?

Nay, all its corners may be painted plain
 Where Heaven shows pictures of some life
 spent well,

And may be stamped, a memory all in vain,
 Upon the sight of lidless eyes in Hell.

¹Moor. ²Pervading. ³The nightingale.

⁴Swedenborg.

65. KNOWN IN VAIN

As two whose love, first foolish, widening
 scope,
 Knows suddenly, to music high and soft,
 The Holy of holies; who because they
 scoffed
 Are now amazed with shame, nor dare to cope
 With the whole truth aloud, lest heaven
 should ope;
 Yet, at their meetings, laugh not as they
 laughed
 In speech; nor speak, at length; but
 sitting oft
 Together, within hopeless sight of hope
 For hours are silent:—So it happeneth
 When Work and Will awake too late, to
 gaze
 After their life sailed by, and hold their
 breath.
 Ah! who shall dare to search through
 what sad maze
 Thenceforth their incommunicable ways
 Follow the desultory feet of Death?

66. THE HEART OF THE NIGHT

From child to youth; from youth to arduous
 man;
 From lethargy to fever of the heart;
 From faithful life to dream-dowered days
 apart;
 From trust to doubt; from doubt to brink
 of ban;¹—
 Thus much of change in one swift cycle ran
 Till now. Alas, the soul!—how soon must
 she
 Accept her primal immortality,—
 The flesh resume its dust whence it began?

O Lord of work and peace! O Lord of life!
 O Lord, the awful Lord of will! though
 late,
 Even yet renew this soul with duteous
 breath;
 That when the peace is garnered in from
 strife,
 The work retrieved, the will regenerate,
 This soul may see thy face, O Lord of
 death!

67. THE LANDMARK

Was *that* the landmark? What,—the foolish
 well

¹Hate,

Whose wave, low down, I did not stoop
 to drink,
 But sat² and flung the pebbles from its
 brink
 In sport to send its imaged skies pell-mell,
 (And mine own image, had I noted well!)—
 Was that my point of turning?—I had
 thought
 The stations of my course should rise
 unsought,
 As altar-stone or ensigned citadel.

But lo! the path is missed, I must go back,
 And thirst to drink when next I reach the
 spring
 Which once I stained, which since may have
 grown black.
 Yet though no light be left nor bird now
 sing
 As here I turn, I'll thank God, hasten-
 ing,
 That the same goal is still on the same track.

71, 72, 73. THE CHOICE

1

EAT thou and drink; to-morrow thou shalt
 die.
 Surely the earth, that's wise being very
 old,
 Needs not our help. Then loose me, love,
 and hold
 Thy sultry hair up from my face; that I
 May pour for thee this golden wine, brim-
 high,
 Till round the glass thy fingers glow like
 gold.
 We'll drown all hours: thy song, while
 hours are tolled,
 Shall leap, as fountains veil the changing sky.

Now kiss, and think that there are really
 those,
 My own high-bosomed beauty, who in-
 crease
 Vain gold, vain lore, and yet might
 choose our way!
 Through many years they toil; then on a
 day
 They die not,—for their life was death,—
 but cease;
 And round their narrow lips the mold falls
 close.

II

WATCH thou and fear; to-morrow thou shalt die.

Or art thou sure thou shalt have time for death?

Is not the day which God's word promiseth To come man knows not when? In yonder sky,

Now while we speak, the sun speeds forth: can I

Or thou assure him of his goal? God's breath

Even at this moment haply quickeneth The air to a flame; till spirits, always nigh Though screened and hid, shall walk the daylight here.

And dost thou prate of all that man shall do?

Canst thou, who hast but plagues, presume to be

Glad in his gladness that comes after thee?

Will *his* strength slay *thy* worm in Hell? Go to:

Cover thy countenance, and watch, and fear.

III

THINK thou and act; to-morrow thou shalt die,

Outstretched in the sun's warmth upon the shore,

Thou say'st: "Man's measured path is all gone o'er:

Up all his years, steeply, with strain and sigh, Man clomb until he touched the truth; and I,

Even I, am he whom it was destined for."

How should this be? Art thou then so much more

Than they who sowed, that thou shouldst reap thereby?

Nay, come up hither. From this wave-washed mound

Unto the furthest flood-brim look with me; Then reach on with thy thought till it be drowned.

Miles and miles distant though the last line be,

And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues beyond,—

Still, leagues beyond those leagues, there is more sea.

82. HOARDED JOY

I SAID: "Nay, pluck not,—let the first fruit be:

Even as thou sayest, it is sweet and red, But let it ripen still. The tree's bent head

Sees in the stream its own fecundity

And bides the day of fullness. Shall not we

At the sun's hour that day possess the shade,

And claim our fruit before its ripeness fade,

And eat it from the branch and praise the tree?"

I say: "Alas! our fruit hath wooed the sun Too long,—'tis fallen and floats adown the stream.

Lo, the last clusters! Pluck them every one,

And let us sup with summer; ere the gleam

Of autumn set the year's pent sorrow free, And the woods wail like echoes from the sea."

85. VAIN VIRTUES

WHAT is the sorriest thing that enters Hell?

None of the sins,—but this and that fair deed

Which a soul's sin at length could supersede.

These yet are virgins, whom death's timely knell

Might once have sainted; whom the fiends compel

Together now, in snake-bound shuddering sheaves

Of anguish, while the pit's pollution leaves Their refuse maidenhood abominable.

Night sucks them down, the tribute of the pit,

Whose names, half entered in the book of Life,

Were God's desire at noon. And as their hair

And eyes sink last, the Torturer deigns no whit

To gaze, but, yearning, waits his destined wife,

The Sin still blithe on earth that sent them there.

86. LOST DAYS

THE lost days of my life until to-day,
 What were they, could I see them on the
 street
 Lie as they fell? Would they be ears of
 wheat
 Sown once for food but trodden into clay?
 Or golden coins squandered and still to pay?
 Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty feet?
 Or such spilt water as in dreams must
 cheat
 The undying throats of Hell, athirst alway?

I do not see them here; but after death
 God knows I know the faces I shall see,
 Each one a murdered self, with low last
 breath.
 "I am thyself,—what hast thou done to
 me?"
 "And I—and I—thyself" (lo! each one
 saith),
 "And thou thyself to all eternity!"

97. A SUPERScription

• LOOK in my face; my name is Might-have-
 been;
 I am also called No-more, Too-late,
 Farewell;
 Unto thine ear I hold the dead-sea shell
 Cast up thy Life's foam-fretted feet between;
 Unto thine eyes the glass where that is seen
 Which had Life's form and Love's, but
 by my spell
 Is now a shaken shadow intolerable,
 Of ultimate things unuttered the frail screen.

Mark me, how still I am! But should there
 dart
 One moment through thy soul the soft
 surprise
 Of that winged Peace which lulls the
 breath of sighs,—
 Then shalt thou see me smile, and turn apart
 Thy visage to mine ambush at thy heart
 Sleepless with cold commemorative eyes.

101. THE ONE HOPE

WHEN vain desire at last and vain regret
 Go hand in hand to death, and all is vain,
 What shall assuage the unforgotten pain
 And teach the unforgetful to forget?
 Shall Peace be still a sunk stream long
 unmet,—

Or may the soul at once in a green plain
 Stoop through the spray of some sweet
 life-fountain
 And cull the dew-drenched flowering amulet?

Ah! when the wan soul in that golden air
 Between the scripted petals softly
 blown
 Peers breathless for the gift of grace
 unknown,—
 Ah! let none other alien spell soe'er
 But only the one Hope's one name be there,—
 Not less nor more, but even that word
 alone.

MY SISTER'S SLEEP¹

SHE fell asleep on Christmas Eve.
 At length the long-ungranted shade
 Of weary eyelids overweighed
 The pain nought else might yet relieve.

Our mother, who had leaned all day
 Over the bed from chime to chime,
 Then raised herself for the first time,
 And as she sat her down, did pray.

Her little work-table was spread
 With work to finish. For the glare
 Made by her candle, she had care
 To work some distance from the bed.

Without, there was a cold moon up,
 Of winter radiance sheer and thin;
 The hollow halo it was in
 Was like an icy crystal cup.

Through the small room, with subtle sound
 Of flame, by vents the fireshine drove
 And reddened. In its dim alcove
 The mirror shed a clearness round.

I had been sitting up some nights,
 And my tired mind felt weak and blank;
 Like a sharp strengthening wine it drank
 The stillness and the broken lights.

Twelve struck. That sound, by dwindling
 years
 Heard in each hour, crept off; and then
 The ruffled silence spread again,
 Like water that a pebble stirs.

¹This and the three following poems were written not
 later than 1850.

Our mother rose from where she sat:
 Her needles, as she laid them down,
 Met lightly, and her silken gown
 Settled: no other noise than that.

"Glory unto the Newly Born!"
 So, as said angels, she did say;
 Because we were in Christmas Day,
 Though it would still be long till morn.

Just then in the room over us
 There was a pushing back of chairs,
 As some who had sat unawares
 So late, now heard the hour, and rose.

With anxious softly-stepping haste
 Our mother went where Margaret lay,
 Fearing the sounds o'erhead—should they
 Have broken her long watched-for rest!

She stooped an instant, calm, and turned;
 But suddenly turned back again;
 And all her features seemed in pain
 With woe, and her eyes gazed and yearned.

For my part, I but hid my face,
 And held my breath, and spoke no word:
 There was none spoken; but I heard
 The silence for a little space.

Our mother bowed herself and wept:
 And both my arms fell, and I said,
 "God knows I knew that she was dead."
 And there, all white, my sister slept.

Then kneeling, upon Christmas morn
 A little after twelve o'clock,
 We said, ere the first quarter struck,
 "Christ's blessing on the newly born!"

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

THE blessed damozel leaned out
 From the gold bar of Heaven;
 Her eyes were deeper than the depth
 Of waters stilled at even;
 She had three lilies in her hand,
 And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
 No wrought flowers did adorn,
 But a white rose of Mary's gift,
 For service meetly worn;
 Her hair that lay along her back
 Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseemed she scarce had been a day
 One of God's choristers;
 The wonder was not yet quite gone
 From that still look of hers;
 Albeit, to them she left, her day
 Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.
 . . . Yet now, and in this place,
 Surely she leaned o'er me—her hair
 Fell all about my face. . . .
 Nothing: the autumn-fall of leaves.
 The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house
 That she was standing on;
 By God built over the sheer depth
 The which is Space begun;
 So high, that looking downward thence
 She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood,
 Of ether, as a bridge.
 Beneath, the tides of day and night
 With flame and darkness ridge
 The void, as low as where this earth
 Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met
 'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
 Spoke evermore among themselves
 Their heart-remembered names;
 And the souls mounting up to God
 Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bowed herself and stooped
 Out of the circling charm;
 Until her bosom must have made
 The bar she leaned on warm,
 And the lilies lay as if asleep
 Along her bended arm.

From the fixed place of Heaven she saw
 Time like a pulse shake fierce
 Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
 Within the gulf to pierce
 Its path; and now she spoke as when
 The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curled moon
 Was like a little feather
 Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
 She spoke through the still weather.
 Her voice was like the voice the stars
 Had when they sang together.

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,
 Strove not her accents there,
 Fain to be hearkened? When those bells
 Possessed the mid-day air,
 Strove not her steps to reach my side
 Down all the echoing stair?)

"I wish that he were come to me,
 For he will come," she said.
 "Have I not prayed in Heaven?—on earth,
 Lord, Lord, has he not prayed?
 Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
 And shall I feel afraid?"

"When round his head the aureole clings,
 And he is clothed in white,
 I'll take his hand and go with him
 To the deep wells of light;
 As unto a stream we will step down,
 And bathe there in God's sight.

"We two will stand beside that shrine,
 Occult, withheld, untrod,
 Whose lamps are stirred continually
 With prayer sent up to God;
 And see our old prayers, granted, melt
 Each like a little cloud.

"We two will lie i' the shadow of
 That living mystic tree
 Within whose secret growth the Dove
 Is sometimes felt to be,
 While every leaf that His plumes touch
 Saith His Name audibly.

"And I myself will teach to him,
 I myself, lying so,
 The songs I sing here; which his voice
 Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
 And find some knowledge at each pause,
 Or some new thing to know."

(Alas! we two, we two, thou say'st!
 Yea, one wast thou with me
 That once of old. But shall God lift
 To endless unity
 The soul whose likeness with thy soul
 Was but its love for thee?)

"We two," she said, "will seek the groves
 Where the lady Mary is,
 With her five handmaidens, whose names
 Are five sweet symphonies,
 Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
 Margaret and Rosalys.

"Circlewise sit they, with bound locks
 And foreheads garlanded;
 Into the fine cloth white like flame
 Weaving the golden thread,
 To fashion the birth-robcs for them
 Who are just born, being dead.

"He shall fear, haply, and be dumb:
 Then will I lay my cheek
 To his, and tell about our love,
 Not once abashed or weak:
 And the dear Mother will approve
 My pride, and let me speak.

"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
 To Him round whom all souls
 Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads
 Bowed with their aureoles:
 And angels meeting us shall sing
 To their citherns and citoles.¹

"There will I ask of Christ the Lord
 Thus much for him and me:—
 Only to live as once on earth
 With Love,—only to be,
 As then awhile, for ever now
 Together, I and he."

She gazed and listened and then said,
 Less sad of speech than mild,—
 "All this is when he comes." She ceased.
 The light thrilled towards her, filled
 With angels in strong level flight.
 Her eyes prayed, and she smiled.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
 Was vague in distant spheres:
 And then she cast her arms along
 The golden barriers,
 And laid her face between her hands,
 And wept. (I heard her tears.)

ON REFUSAL OF AID BETWEEN NATIONS

NOT that the earth is changing, O my God!
 Nor that the seasons totter in their walk,—
 Not that the virulent ill of act and talk
 Seethes ever as a winepress ever trod,—
 Not therefore are we certain that the rod
 Weighs in thine hand to smite thy world;
 though now
 Beneath thine hand so many nations bow,
 So many kings?—not therefore, O my God!

¹Stringed musical instruments.

But because Man is parceled out in men
 To-day; because, for any wrongful blow
 No man not stricken asks, "I would be
 told
 Why thou dost thus"; but his heart whispers
 then,
 "He is he, I am I." By this we know
 That our earth falls asunder, being old.

THE SEA-LIMITS

CONSIDER the sea's listless chime:
 Time's self it is, made audible,—
 The murmur of the earth's own shell.
 Secret continuance sublime
 Is the sea's end: our sight may pass
 No furlong further. Since time was,
 This sound hath told the lapse of time.

No quiet, which is death's,—it hath
 The mournfulness of ancient life,
 Enduring always at dull strife.
 As the world's heart of rest and wrath,
 Its painful pulse is in the sands.
 Last utterly, the whole sky stands,
 Gray and not known, along its path.

Listen alone beside the sea,
 Listen alone among the woods;
 Those voices of twin solitudes
 Shall have one sound alike to thee:
 Hark where the murmurs of thronged
 men
 Surge and sink back and surge again,—
 Still the one voice of wave and tree.

Gather a shell from the strown beach
 And listen at its lips: they sigh
 The same desire and mystery,
 The echo of the whole sea's speech.
 And all mankind is thus at heart
 Not anything but what thou art:
 And Earth, Sea, Man, are all in each.

THE MIRROR

SHE knew it not:—most perfect pain
 To learn: this too she knew not. Strife
 For me, calm hers, as from the first.
 'Twas but another bubble burst
 Upon the curdling draught of life,—
 My silent patience mine again.

As who, of forms that crowd unknown
 Within a distant mirror's shade,
 Deems such an one himself, and makes
 Some sign; but when the image shakes
 No whit, he finds his thought betrayed,
 And must seek elsewhere for his own.

LOVE'S NOCTURN

MASTER of the murmuring courts
 Where the shapes of sleep convene!—
 Lo! my spirit here exhorts
 All the powers of thy demesne!
 For their aid to woo my queen.
 What reports
 Yield thy jealous courts unseen?

Vaporous, unaccountable,
 Dreamworld lies forlorn of light,
 Hollow like a breathing shell.
 Ah! that from all dreams I might
 Choose one dream and guide its flight!
 I know well
 What her sleep should tell to-night.

There the dreams are multitudes:
 Some that will not wait for sleep,
 Deep within the August woods;
 Some that hum while rest may steep
 Weary labor laid a-heap;
 Interludes,
 Some, of grievous moods that weep.

Poets' fancies all are there:
 There the elf-girls flood with wings
 Valleys full of plaintive air;
 There breathe perfumes; there in rings
 Whirl the foam-bewildered springs;
 Siren there
 Winds her dizzy hair and sings.

Thence the one dream mutually
 Dreamed in bridal unison,
 Less than waking ecstasy;
 Half-formed visions that make moan
 In the house of birth alone;
 And what we
 At death's wicket see, unknown.

But for mine own sleep, it lies
 In one gracious form's control,
 Fair with honorable eyes,
 Lamps of a translucent soul:

¹Domain.

O their glance is loftiest dole,¹
 Sweet and wise,
 Wherein Love descries his goal.

Reft of her, my dreams are all
 * Clammy trance that fears the sky:
 Changing footpaths shift and fall;
 From polluted coverts nigh,
 Miserable phantoms sigh;
 Quakes the pall,
 And the funeral goes by.

Master, is it soothly said
 That, as echoes of man's speech
 Far in secret clefts are made,
 So do all men's bodies reach
 Shadows o'er thy sunken beach,—
 Shape or shade
 In those halls portrayed of each?

Ah! might I, by thy good grace
 Groping in the windy stair
 (Darkness and the breath of space
 Like loud waters everywhere),
 Meeting mine own image there
 Face to face,
 Send it from that place to her!

Nay, not I; but oh! do thou,
 Master, from thy shadowkind
 Call my body's phantom now:
 Bid it bear its face declined
 Till its flight her slumbers find,
 And her brow
 Feel its presence bow like wind.

Where in groves the gracile Spring
 Trembles, with mute orison
 Confidently strengthening,
 Water's voice and wind's as one
 Shed an echo in the sun.
 Soft as Spring,
 Master, bid it sing and moan.

Song shall tell how glad and strong
 Is the night she soothes away;
 Moan shall grieve with that parched tongue
 Of the brazen hours of day:
 Sounds as of the springtide they,
 Moan and song,
 While the chill months long for May.

Not the prayers which with all leave
 The world's fluent woes prefer,—
 Not the praise the world doth give,
 Dulcet fulsome whisperer;—
 Let it yield my love to her,
 And achieve
 Strength that shall not grieve or err.

Wheresoe'er my dreams befall,
 Both at night-watch (let it say),
 And where round the sundial
 The reluctant hours of day,
 Heartless, hopeless of their way,
 Rest and call;—
 There her glance doth fall and stay.

Suddenly her face is there:
 So do mounting vapors wreathe
 Subtle-scented transports where
 The black firwood sets its teeth.
 Part the boughs and look beneath,—
 Lilies share
 Secret waters there, and breathe.

Master, bid my shadow bend
 Whispering thus till birth of light,
 Lest new shapes that sleep may send
 Scatter all its work to flight;—
 Master, master of the night,
 Bid it spend
 Speech, song, prayer, and end aright.

Yet, ah me! if at her head
 There another phantom lean
 Murmuring o'er the fragrant bed,—
 Ah! and if my spirit's queen
 Smile those alien prayers between,—
 Ah! poor shade!
 Shall it strive, or fade unseen?

How should love's own messenger
 Strive with love and be love's foe?
 Master, nay! If thus, in her,
 Sleep a wedded heart should show,—
 Silent let mine image go,
 Its old share
 Of thy spell-bound air to know.

Like a vapor wan and mute,
 Like a flame, so let it pass;
 One low sigh across her lute,
 One dull breath against her glass;
 And to my sad soul, alas!
 One salute
 Cold as when death's foot shall pass.

¹Fortune.

Then, too, let all hopes of mine,
 All vain hopes by night and day,
 Slowly at thy summoning sign
 Rise up pallid and obey.
 Dreams, if this is thus, were they:—
 Be they thine,
 And to dreamworld pine away.

Yet from old time, life, not death,
 Master, in thy rule is rife:
 Lo! through thee, with mingling breath,
 Adam woke beside his wife.
 O Love bring me so, for strife,
 Force and faith,
 Bring me so not death but life!

Yea, to Love himself is poured
 This frail song of hope and fear.
 Thou art Love, of one accord
 With kind Sleep to bring her near,
 Still-eyed, deep-eyed, ah how dear!
 Master, Lord,
 In her name implored, O hear!

SUDDEN LIGHT

I HAVE been here before,
 But when or how I cannot tell:
 I know the grass beyond the door,
 The sweet keen smell,
 The sighing sound, the lights around the
 shore.

You have been mine before,—
 How long ago I may not know:
 But just when at that swallow's soar
 Your neck turned so,
 Some veil did fall,—I knew it all of yore.

Has this been thus before?
 And shall not thus time's eddying flight
 Still with our lives our love restore
 In death's despite,
 And day and night yield one delight once
 more?

THE CLOUD CONFINES

THE day is dark and the night
 To him that would search their heart;
 No lips of cloud that will part
 Nor morning song in the light:
 Only, gazing alone,
 To him wild shadows are shown,
 Deep under deep unknown

And height above unknown height.
 Still we say as we go,—
 "Strange to think by the way,
 Whatever there is to know,
 That shall we know one day."

The Past is over and fled;
 Named new, we name it the old;
 Thereof some tale hath been told,
 But no word comes from the dead;
 Whether at all they be,
 Or whether as bond or free,
 Or whether they too were we,
 Or by what spell they have sped.
 Still we say as we go,—
 "Strange to think by the way,
 Whatever there is to know,
 That shall we know one day."

What of the heart of hate
 That beats in thy breast, O Time?—
 Red strife from the furthest prime,
 And anguish of fierce debate;
 War that shatters her slain,
 And peace that grinds them as grain,
 And eyes fixed ever in vain
 On the pitiless eyes of Fate.
 Still we say as we go,—
 "Strange to think by the way,
 Whatever there is to know,
 That shall we know one day."

What of the heart of love
 That bleeds in thy breast, O Man?—
 Thy kisses snatched 'neath the ban
 Of fangs that mock them above;
 Thy bells prolonged unto knells,
 Thy hope that a breath dispels,
 Thy bitter forlorn farewells
 And the empty echoes thereof?
 Still we say as we go,—
 "Strange to think by the way,
 Whatever there is to know,
 That shall we know one day."

The sky leans dumb on the sea,
 Awearied with all its wings;
 And oh! the song the sea sings
 Is dark everlastingly.
 Our past is clean forgot,
 Our present is and is not,
 Our future's a sealed seedplot,
 And what betwixt them are we?—

We who say as we go,—
“Strange to think by the way,
Whatever there is to know,
That shall we know one day.”

THREE SHADOWS

I LOOKED and saw your eyes
In the shadow of your hair
As a traveler sees the stream
In the shadow of the wood;
And I said, “My faint heart sighs
Ah me! to linger there,
To drink deep and to dream
In that sweet solitude.”

I looked and saw your heart
In the shadow of your eyes,
As a seeker sees the gold
In the shadow of the stream;
And I said, “Ah me! what art
Should win the immortal prize,
Whose want must make life cold
And Heaven a hollow dream?”

I looked and saw your love
In the shadow of your heart,
As a diver sees the pearl
In the shadow of the sea;
And I murmured, not above
My breath, but all apart,—
“Ah! you can love, true girl,
And is your love for me?”

WALTER PATER (1839-1894)

Walter Horatio Pater was born at Shadwell, in East London, on 4 August, 1839. His father, who was a physician, died so early that in later life Pater could scarcely remember him. At his death the family moved to a house in Chase Side, Enfield, where they remained some fourteen or fifteen years. Pater received his earliest education at a school in Enfield, and at fourteen proceeded to King's School, Canterbury. There he led a happy life—to some extent portrayed in *Emerald Uthwatt*—despite his complete indifference to outdoor games. He did creditable work at school, but was not precocious in his development, though as a youth he shadowed forth his manhood by living much alone and exhibiting a meditative and serious disposition. Just before he left school he came upon Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, and fell abruptly under the influence of that book. In June, 1858, Pater entered Queen's College, Oxford, with a scholarship from his Canterbury school. In 1862 he took his B. A. with a second class in classics. He had long intended to take holy orders, but by this time had abandoned the idea, and for a time he now read with private pupils. In 1863 he was elected a member of the "Old Mortality," an essay society whose membership then included T. H. Green, H. Nettleship, J. Bryce, Edward Caird, and I. Bywater; and through this society Pater also became acquainted with Swinburne. In 1864 he was elected a Fellow of Brasenose College, and at once went into residence there. He held his fellowship and his rooms at Brasenose through the remainder of his life, though in later years he also maintained, with his sisters, a house in Oxford, and, for a brief period, one in London. He generally spent his long vacations in Germany or northern France, and in 1865 he went to Italy with his friend C. L. Shadwell. In 1882 he also spent the winter in Rome. Save for these journeys and the publication of his essays and books Pater's life was uneventful. He was attacked by rheumatic fever in June, 1894, and died suddenly on the following 30 July. He was buried in the cemetery of St. Giles, Oxford.

Pater may be termed the philosopher of the modern or neo-romantic school of Rossetti, Swinburne, and Morris. He sought to think through what they felt and expressed in poetry and art. He saw that their attitude towards life coincided with what, one might contend, was the great lesson of modern philosophy and science in their progress away from ancient and medieval confidence in the ability of human reason to penetrate reality, and in their conclusion that the intellectual life of man is bounded by the impressions of the senses. He concluded that if the sole stuff of life is sense-impressions, Rossetti and his followers were right in their implication that life is fundamentally a problem in æsthetics. Consequently Pater attempted to found an æsthetic criticism in a series of studies and imaginary portraits, the more important of which are contained in *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), *Imaginary Portraits* (1887), and *Appreciations* (1889). His lectures on *Plato and Platonism* (1893) are in reality, though less obviously, an effort in the same kind. And his longest and most carefully wrought work, *Marius the Epicurean* (1885), contains his full exposition, in a form at once literary and meditative, of his æsthetic Epicureanism. Pater's work taken as a whole thus has an important historical interest, and, in addition, his books are full of the rare charm and rightness of a very distinguished and finely cultivated mind. Pater's readers are inevitably struck by his humanity, by the unobtrusiveness of his scholarship, by his never-failing good taste, and by his gift—amounting to genius—for the precise expression of his meaning.

CONCLUSION ¹

Λέγει που Ἡράκλειτος ὅτι πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει.²

TO REGARD all things and principles of things as inconstant modes or fashions has more and more become the tendency of modern thought. Let us begin with that which is without—our physical life. Fix

¹Written in 1868 and printed at the end of *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* in 1873. It was omitted from the second edition of that book (1877), but restored in the third edition (1888) with the following note: "This brief *Conclusion* was omitted in the second

upon it in one of its more exquisite intervals the moment, for instance, of delicious recoil from the flood of water in summer heat. What is the whole physical life in that

edition of this book, as I conceived it might possibly mislead some of those young men into whose hands it might fall. On the whole, I have thought it best to reprint it here, with some slight changes which bring it closer to my original meaning. I have dealt more fully in *Marius the Epicurean* with the thoughts suggested by it." The *Conclusion* and the two following pieces by Pater are here reprinted with the permission of the Macmillan Company.

²Heracitus says that all things give way and nothing remains (Plato, *Cratylus*),

moment but a combination of natural elements to which science gives their names? But those elements, phosphorus and lime and delicate fibers, are present not in the human body alone: we detect them in places most remote from it. Our physical life is a perpetual motion of them—the passage of the blood, the wasting and repairing of the lenses of the eye, the modification of the tissues of the brain under every ray of light and sound—processes which science reduces to simpler and more elementary forces. Like the elements of which we are composed, the action of these forces extends beyond us: it rusts iron and ripens corn. Far out on every side of us those elements are broadcast, driven in many currents; and birth and gesture¹ and death and the springing of violets from the grave are but a few out of ten thousand resultant combinations. That clear, perpetual outline of face and limb is but an image of ours, under which we group them—a design in a web, the actual threads of which pass out beyond it. This at least of flamelike our life has, that it is but the concurrence, renewed from moment to moment, of forces parting sooner or later on their ways.

Or if we begin with the inward world of thought and feeling, the whirlpool is still more rapid, the flame more eager and devouring. There it is no longer the gradual darkening of the eye, the gradual fading of color from the wall—movements of the shore-side, where the water flows down indeed, though in apparent rest—but the race of the midstream, a drift of momentary acts of sight and passion and thought. At first sight experience seems to bury us under a flood of external objects, pressing upon us with a sharp and importunate reality, calling us out of ourselves in a thousand forms of action. But when reflection begins to play upon those objects they are dissipated under its influence; the cohesive force seems suspended like some trick of magic; each object is loosed into a group of impressions—color, odor, texture—in the mind of the observer. And if we continue to dwell in thought on this world, not of objects in the solidity with which language invests them, but of impressions, unstable, flickering, inconsistent,

which burn and are extinguished with our consciousness of them, it contracts still further: the whole scope of observation is dwarfed into the narrow chamber of the individual mind. Experience, already reduced to a group of impressions, is ringed round for each one of us by that thick wall of personality through which no real voice has ever pierced on its way to us, or from us to that which we can only conjecture to be without. Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world. Analysis goes a step farther still, and assures us that those impressions of the individual mind to which, for each one of us, experience dwindles down, are in perpetual flight; that each of them is limited by time, and that as time is infinitely divisible, each of them is infinitely divisible also; all that is actual in it being a single moment, gone while we try to apprehend it, of which it may ever be more truly said that it has ceased to be than that it is. To such a tremulous wisp constantly reforming itself on the stream, to a single sharp impression, with a sense in it, a relic more or less fleeting, of such moments gone by, what is real in our life fines itself down. It is with this movement, with the passage and dissolution of impressions, images, sensations, that analysis leaves off—that continual vanishing away, that strange, perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves.

Philosophiren, says Novalis, *ist dephlegmatisiren vivificiren*.² The service of philosophy, of speculative culture, towards the human spirit, is to rouse, to startle it to a life of constant and eager observation. Every moment some form grows perfect in hand or face; some tone on the hills or the sea is choicer than the rest; some mood of passion or insight or intellectual excitement is irresistibly real and attractive to us,—for that moment only. Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end. A counted number of pulses only is given to us of a variegated, dramatic life. How may we see in them all that is to be seen in them by the finest senses? How shall we pass

¹Bearing, behavior.

²To be a philosopher is to rid one's self of inertia, to become alive. (Novalis was the pseudonym of Friedrich von Hardenberg, 1772–1801.)

most swiftly from point to point, and be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy?

To burn always with this hard, gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life. In a sense it might even be said that our failure is to form habits: for, after all, habit is relative to a stereotyped world, and meantime it is only the roughness of the eye that makes any two persons, things, situations, seem alike. While all melts under our feet, we may well grasp at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange colors, and curious odors, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend. Not to discriminate every moment some passionate attitude in those about us, and in the very brilliancy of their gifts some tragic dividing of forces on their ways, is, on this short day of frost and sun, to sleep before evening. With this sense of the splendor of our experience and of its awful brevity, gathering all we are into one desperate effort to see and touch, we shall hardly have time to make theories about the things we see and touch. What we have to do is to be for ever curiously testing new opinions and courting new impressions, never acquiescing in a facile orthodoxy of Comte, or of Hegel, or of our own. Philosophical theories or ideas, as points of view, instruments of criticism, may help us to gather up what might otherwise pass unregarded by us. "Philosophy is the microscope of thought." The theory or idea or system which requires of us the sacrifice of any part of this experience, in consideration of some interest into which we cannot enter, or some abstract theory we have not identified with ourselves, or of what is only conventional, has no real claim upon us.

One of the most beautiful passages of Rousseau is that in the sixth book of the *Confessions*, where he describes the awakening in him of the literary sense. An undefinable taint of death had always clung about him, and now in early manhood he believed himself smitten by mortal disease. He asked himself how he might make as much as possible of the interval that

remained; and he was not biased by anything in his previous life when he decided that it must be by intellectual excitement, which he found just then in the clear, fresh writings of Voltaire. Well! we are all *condamnés*, as Victor Hugo says: we are all under sentence of death but with a sort of indefinite reprieve—*les hommes sont tous condamnés à mort avec des sursis indéfinis*: we have an interval, and then our place knows us no more. Some spend this interval in listlessness, some in high passions, the wisest, at least among "the children of this world," in art and song. For our one chance lies in expanding that interval, in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time. Great passions may give us this quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love, the various forms of enthusiastic activity, disinterested or otherwise, which come naturally to many of us. Only be sure it is passion—that it does yield you this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness. Of such wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for its own sake, has most. For art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake.

POSTSCRIPT¹

THE words, *classical* and *romantic*, although, like many other critical expressions, sometimes abused by those who have understood them too vaguely or too absolutely, yet define two real tendencies in the history of art and literature. Used in an exaggerated sense, to express a greater opposition between those tendencies than really exists, they have at times tended to divide people of taste into opposite camps. But in that *House Beautiful*, which the creative minds of all generations—the artists and those who have treated life in the spirit of art—are always building together, for the refreshment of the human spirit, these oppositions cease; and the *Interpreter* of the *House Beautiful*, the true æsthetic critic, uses these divisions, only so

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far as they enable him to enter into the peculiarities of the objects with which he has to do. The term *classical*, fixed, as it is, to a well-defined literature, and a well-defined group in art, is clear, indeed; but then it has often been used in a hard, and merely scholastic sense, by the praisers of what is old and accustomed, at the expense of what is new, by critics who would never have discovered for themselves the charm of any work, whether new or old, who value what is old, in art or literature, for its accessories, and chiefly for the conventional authority that has gathered about it—people who would never really have been made glad by any Venus fresh-risen from the sea, and who praise the Venus of old Greece and Rome, only because they fancy her grown now into something staid and tame.

And as the term, *classical*, has been used in a too absolute, and therefore in a misleading sense, so the term, *romantic*, has been used much too vaguely, in various accidental senses. The sense in which Scott is called a romantic writer is chiefly this; that, in opposition to the literary tradition of the last century, he loved strange adventure, and sought it in the Middle Age. Much later, in a Yorkshire village, the spirit of romanticism bore a more really characteristic fruit in the work of a young girl, Emily Brontë, the romance of *Wuthering Heights*; the figures of Hareton Earnshaw, of Catherine Linton, and of Heathcliff—tearing open Catherine's grave, removing one side of her coffin, that he may really lie beside her in death—figures so passionate, yet woven on a background of delicately beautiful, moorland scenery, being typical examples of that spirit. In Germany, again, that spirit is shown less in Tieck, its professional representative, than in Meinhold, the author of *Sidonia the Sorceress* and the *Amber-Witch*. In Germany and France, within the last hundred years, the term has been used to describe a particular school of writers; and, consequently, when Heine criticizes the *Romantic School* in Germany—that movement which culminated in Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen*; or when Théophile Gautier criticizes the romantic movement in France, where, indeed, it bore its most characteristic fruits, and its play is hardly yet over—where, by a certain audacity, or *bizarrierie* of motive, united with faultless

literary execution, it still shows itself in imaginative literature—they use the word, with an exact sense of special artistic qualities, indeed; but use it, nevertheless, with a limited application to the manifestation of those qualities at a particular period. But the romantic spirit is, in reality, an ever-present, an enduring principle, in the artistic temperament; and the qualities of thought and style which that, and other similar uses of the word *romantic* really indicate, are indeed but symptoms of a very continuous and widely working influence.

Though the words *classical* and *romantic*, then, have acquired an almost technical meaning, in application to certain developments of German and French taste, yet this is but one variation of an old opposition, which may be traced from the very beginning of the formation of European art and literature. From the first formation of anything like a standard of taste in these things, the restless curiosity of their more eager lovers necessarily made itself felt, in the craving for new motives, new subjects of interest, new modifications of style. Hence, the opposition between the classicists and the romanticists—between the adherents, in the culture of beauty, of the principles of liberty, and authority, respectively—of strength, and order or what the Greeks called *κοσμιότης*.¹

Sainte-Beuve, in the third volume of the *Causeries du Lundi*, has discussed the question, *What is meant by a classic?* It was a question he was well fitted to answer, having himself lived through many phases of taste, and having been in earlier life an enthusiastic member of the romantic school: he was also a great master of that sort of "philosophy of literature," which delights in tracing traditions in it, and the way in which various phases of thought and sentiment maintain themselves, through successive modifications, from epoch to epoch. His aim, then, is to give the word *classic* a wider and, as he says, a more generous sense than it commonly bears, to make it expressly *grandiose et flottant*;² and, in doing this, he develops, in a masterly manner, those qualities of measure, purity, temperance, of which it is the especial function of classical art and literature, whatever meaning, narrower or wider, we attach to the term, to take care.

¹Decorum. ²Large and general.

The charm, therefore, of what is classical, in art or literature, is that of the well-known tale, to which we can, nevertheless, listen over and over again, because it is told so well. To the absolute beauty of its artistic form, is added the accidental, tranquil, charm of familiarity. There are times, indeed, at which these charms fail to work on our spirits at all, because they fail to excite us. "*Romanticism*," says Stendhal, "is the art of presenting to people the literary works which, in the actual state of their habits and beliefs, are capable of giving them the greatest possible pleasure; *classicism*, on the contrary, of presenting them with that which gave the greatest possible pleasure to their grandfathers." But then, beneath all changes of habits and beliefs, our love of that mere abstract proportion—of music—which what is classical in literature possesses, still maintains itself in the best of us, and what pleased our grandparents may at least tranquilize us. The "classic" comes to us out of the cool and quiet of other times, as the measure of what a long experience has shown will at least never displease us. And in the classical literature of Greece and Rome, as in the classics of the last century, the essentially classical element is that quality of order in beauty, which they possess, indeed, in a pre-eminent degree, and which impresses some minds to the exclusion of everything else in them.

It is the addition of strangeness to beauty, that constitutes the romantic character in art; and the desire of beauty being a fixed element in every artistic organization, it is the addition of curiosity to this desire of beauty, that constitutes the romantic temper. Curiosity and the desire of beauty, have each their place in art, as in all true criticism. When one's curiosity is deficient, when one is not eager enough for new impressions, and new pleasures, one is liable to value mere academical proprieties too highly, to be satisfied with worn-out or conventional types, with the insipid ornament of Racine, or the prettiness of that later Greek sculpture, which passed so long for true Hellenic work; to miss those places where the handiwork of nature, or of the artist, has been most cunning; to find the most stimulating products of art a mere irritation. And when one's curiosity is in

excess, when it overbalances the desire of beauty, then one is liable to value in works of art what is inartistic in them; to be satisfied with what is exaggerated in art, with productions like some of those of the romantic school in Germany; not to distinguish, jealously enough, between what is admirably done, and what is done not quite so well, in the writings, for instance, of Jean Paul.¹ And if I had to give instances of these defects, then I should say, that Pope, in common with the age of literature to which he belonged, had too little curiosity, so that there is always a certain insipidity in the effect of his work, exquisite as it is; and, coming down to our own time, that Balzac had an excess of curiosity—curiosity not duly tempered with the desire of beauty.

But, however falsely those two tendencies may be opposed by critics, or exaggerated by artists themselves, they are tendencies really at work at all times in art, molding it, with the balance sometimes a little on one side, sometimes a little on the other, generating, respectively, as the balance inclines on this side or that, two principles, two traditions, in art, and in literature so far as it partakes of the spirit of art. If there is a great overbalance of curiosity, then, we have the grotesque in art: if the union of strangeness and beauty, under very difficult and complex conditions, be a successful one, if the union be entire, then the resultant beauty is very exquisite, very attractive. With a passionate care for beauty, the romantic spirit refuses to have it, unless the condition of strangeness be first fulfilled. Its desire is for a beauty born of unlikely elements, by a profound alchemy, by a difficult initiation, by the charm which wrings it even out of terrible things; and a trace of distortion, of the grotesque, may perhaps linger, as an additional element of expression, about its ultimate grace. Its eager, excited spirit will have strength, the grotesque, first of all—the trees shrieking as you tear off the leaves; for Jean Valjean,² the long years of convict life; for Redgauntlet,³ the quicksands of Selway Moss; then, incorporate with this strangeness, and

¹Jean Paul Richter (1763-1825).

²In Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*.

³In Scott's *Redgauntlet*.

intensified by restraint, as much sweetness, as much beauty, as is compatible with that. *Energique, frais, et dispos*—these, according to Sainte-Beuve, are the characteristics of a genuine classic—*les ouvrages anciens ne sont pas classiques parce qu'ils sont vieux, mais parce qu'ils sont énergiques, frais, et dispos*.¹ Energy, freshness, intelligent and masterly disposition:—these are characteristics of Victor Hugo when his alchemy is complete, in certain figures, like Marius and Cosette, in certain scenes, like that in the opening of *Les Travailleurs de la Mer*, where Déroulède writes the name of Gilliat in the snow, on Christmas morning; but always there is a certain note of strangeness discernible there, as well.

The essential elements, then, of the romantic spirit are curiosity and the love of beauty; and it is only as an illustration of these qualities, that it seeks the Middle Age, because, in the overcharged atmosphere of the Middle Age, there are unworked sources of romantic effect, of a strange beauty, to be won, by strong imagination, out of things unlikely or remote.

Few, probably, now read Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne*, though it has its interest, the interest which never quite fades out of work really touched with the enthusiasm of the spiritual adventurer, the pioneer in culture. It was published in 1810, to introduce to French readers a new school of writers—the romantic school, from beyond the Rhine; and it was followed, twenty-three years later, by Heine's *Romantische Schule*, as at once a supplement and a correction. Both these books, then, connect romanticism with Germany, with the names especially of Goethe and Tieck; and, to many English readers, the idea of romanticism is still inseparably connected with Germany—that Germany which, in its quaint old towns, under the spire of Strasburg or the towers of Heidelberg, was always listening in rapt inaction to the melodious, fascinating voices of the Middle Age, and which, now that it has got Strasburg back again, has, I suppose, almost ceased to exist. But neither Germany, with its Goethe and Tieck, nor England, with its Byron and Scott, is nearly so representative of the romantic temper

as France, with Murger, and Gautier, and Victor Hugo. It is in French literature that its most characteristic expression is to be found; and that, as most closely derivative, historically, from such peculiar conditions, as ever reinforce it to the utmost.

For, although temperament has much to do with the generation of the romantic spirit, and although this spirit, with its curiosity, its thirst for a curious beauty, may be always traceable in excellent art (traceable even in Sophocles), yet still, in a limited sense, it may be said to be a product of special epochs. Outbreaks of this spirit, that is, come naturally with particular periods—times, when, in men's approaches towards art and poetry, curiosity may be noticed to take the lead, when men come to art and poetry, with a deep thirst for intellectual excitement, after a long *ennui*, or in reaction against the strain of outward, practical things: in the later Middle Age, for instance; so that medieval poetry, centering in Dante, is often opposed to Greek and Roman poetry, as romantic poetry to the classical. What the romanticism of Dante is, may be estimated, if we compare the lines in which Virgil describes the hazel-wood, from whose broken twigs flows the blood of Polydorus, not without the expression of a real shudder at the ghastly incident, with the whole canto of the *Inferno*, into which Dante has expanded them, beautifying and softening it, meanwhile, by a sentiment of profound pity. And it is especially in that period of intellectual disturbance, immediately preceding Dante, amid which the romance languages define themselves at last, that this temper is manifested. Here, in the literature of Provence, the very name of *romanticism* is stamped with its true signification: here we have indeed a romantic world, grotesque even, in the strength of its passions, almost insane in its curious expression of them, drawing all things into its sphere, making the birds, nay! lifeless things, its voices and messengers, yet so penetrated with the desire for beauty and sweetness, that it begets a wholly new species of poetry, in which the *Renaissance* may be said to begin. The last century was pre-eminently a classical age, an age in which, for art and literature, the element of a comely order was in the ascendant; which, passing

¹Ancient literature is not classical because it is old, but because it is spirited, fresh, and well-ordered.

away, left a hard battle to be fought between the classical and the romantic schools. Yet, it is in the heart of this century, of Goldsmith, and Stothard,¹ of Watteau and the *Siècle de Louis XIV*²—in one of its central, if not most characteristic figures, in Rousseau—that the modern or French romanticism really originates. But, what in the eighteenth century is but an exceptional phenomenon, breaking through its fair reserve and discretion only at rare intervals, is the habitual guise of the nineteenth, breaking through it perpetually, with a feverishness, an incomprehensible straining and excitement, which all experience to some degree, but yearning also, in the genuine children of the romantic school, to be *énergique, frais, et dispos*—for those qualities of energy, freshness, comely order; and often, in Murger, in Gautier, in Victor Hugo, for instance, with singular felicity attaining them.

It is in the terrible tragedy of Rousseau, in fact, that French romanticism, with much else, begins: reading his *Confessions* we seem actually to assist at the birth of this new, strong spirit in the French mind. The wildness which has shocked so many, and the fascination which has influenced almost every one, in the squalid, yet eloquent figure, we see and hear so clearly in that book, wandering under the apple-blossoms and among the vines of Neuchâtel or Vevey actually give it the quality of a very successful romantic invention. His strangeness or distortion, his profound subjectivity, his passionateness—the *cor laceratum*³—Rousseau makes all men in love with these. *Je ne suis fait comme aucun de ceux que j'ai sus. Mais si je ne vaux pas mieux, au moins je suis autre.*—"I am not made like any one else I have ever known: yet, if I am not better, at least I am different." These words, from the first page of the *Confessions*, anticipate all the Werthers, Renés, Obermanns,⁴ of the last hundred years. For Rousseau did but anticipate a trouble in the spirit of the whole world; and thirty years

afterwards, what in him was a peculiarity, became part of the general consciousness. A storm was coming: Rousseau, with others, felt it in the air, and they helped to bring it down: they introduced a disturbing element into French literature, then so trim and formal, like our own literature of the age of Queen Anne.

In 1815 the storm had come and gone, but had left, in the spirit of "young France," the *ennui* of an immense disillusion. In the last chapter of Edgar Quinet's *Révolution Française*, a work itself full of irony, of disillusion, he distinguishes two books, Senancour's *Obermann* and Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme*, as characteristic of the first decade of the present century. In those two books we detect already the disease and the cure—in *Obermann* the irony, refined into a plaintive philosophy of "indifference"—in Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme*, the refuge from a tarnished actual present, a present of disillusion, into a world of strength and beauty in the Middle Age, as at an earlier period—in *René* and *Atala*—into the free play of them in savage life. It is to minds in this spiritual situation, weary of the present, but yearning for the spectacle of beauty and strength, that the works of French romanticism appeal. They set a positive value on the intense, the exceptional; and a certain distortion is sometimes noticeable in them, as in conceptions like Victor Hugo's *Quasimodo*, or *Gwynplaine*, something of a terrible grotesque, of the *macabre*, as the French themselves call it; though always combined with perfect literary execution, as in Gautier's *La Morte Amoureuse*, or the scene of the "maimed" burial-rites of the player, dead of the frost, in his *Capitaine Fracasse*—true "flowers of the yew." It becomes grim humor in Victor Hugo's combat of Gilliatt with the devil-fish, or the incident, with all its ghastly comedy drawn out at length, of the great gun detached from its fastenings on shipboard, in *Quatre-Vingt-Treize* (perhaps the most terrible of all the accidents that can happen by sea) and in the entire episode, in that book, of the *Convention*. Not less surely does it reach a genuine pathos; for the habit of noting and distinguishing one's own intimate passages of sentiment makes one sympathetic, begetting, as it must, the

¹Thomas Stothard (1755-1834), English painter and illustrator.

²By Voltaire.

³Torn heart.

⁴The *Sorrows of Werther*, by Goethe; *René*, by Chateaubriand; *Obermann*, by Senancour.

power of entering, by all sorts of finer ways, into the intimate recesses of other minds; so that pity is another quality of romanticism, both Victor Hugo and Gautier being great lovers of animals, and charming writers about them, and Murger being unrivaled in the pathos of his *Scènes de la Vie de Jeunesse*. Penetrating so finely into all situations which appeal to pity, above all, into the special or exceptional phases of such feeling, the romantic humor is not afraid of the quaintness or singularity of its circumstances or expression, pity, indeed, being of the essence of humor; so that Victor Hugo does but turn his romanticism into practice, in his hunger and thirst after practical *Justice*!—a justice which shall no longer wrong children, or animals, for instance, by ignoring in a stupid, mere breadth of view, minute facts about them. Yet the romanticists are antinomian, too, sometimes, because the love of energy and beauty, of distinction in passion, tended naturally to become a little *bizarre*, plunging into the Middle Age, into the secrets of old Italian story. *Are we in the Inferno?*—we are tempted to ask, wondering at something malign in so much beauty. For over all a care for the refreshment of the human spirit by fine art manifests itself, a predominant sense of literary charm, so that, in their search for the secret of exquisite expression, the romantic school went back to the forgotten world of early French poetry, and literature itself became the most delicate of the arts—like “goldsmith’s work,” says Sainte-Beuve, of Bertrand’s *Gaspard de la Nuit*—and that peculiarly French gift, the gift of exquisite speech, *argute loqui*,¹ attained in them a perfection which it had never seen before.

Stendhal, a writer whom I have already quoted, and of whom English readers might well know much more than they do, stands between the earlier and later growths of the romantic spirit. His novels are rich in romantic quality and his other writings—partly criticism, partly personal reminiscences—are a very curious and interesting illustration of the needs out of which romanticism arose. In his book on *Racine and Shakespeare*, Stendhal argues that all good art was romantic in its day; and this is

perhaps true in Stendhal’s sense. That little treatise, full of “dry light” and fertile ideas, was published in the year 1823, and its object is to defend an entire independence and liberty in the choice and treatment of subject, both in art and literature, against those who upheld the exclusive authority of precedent. In pleading the cause of romanticism, therefore, it is the novelty, both of form and of motive, in writings like the *Hernani* of Victor Hugo (which soon followed it, raising a storm of criticism) that he is chiefly concerned to justify. To be interesting and really stimulating, to keep us from yawning even, art and literature must follow the subtle movements of that nimbly-shifting *Time-Spirit*, or *Zeit-Geist*, understood by French not less than by German criticism, which is always modifying men’s taste, as it modifies their manners and their pleasures. This, he contends, is what all great workmen had always understood. Dante, Shakespeare, Molière, had exercised an absolute independence in their choice of subject and treatment. To turn always with that ever-changing spirit, yet to retain the flavor of what was admirably done in past generations, in the classics, as we say—is the problem of true romanticism. “Dante,” he observes, “was pre-eminently the romantic poet. He adored Virgil, yet he wrote the *Divine Comedy*, with the episode of Ugolino, which is as unlike the *Aeneid* as can possibly be. And those who thus obey the fundamental principle of romanticism, one by one become classical, and are joined to that ever-increasing common league, formed by men of all countries, to approach nearer and nearer to perfection.”

Romanticism, then, although it has its epochs, is in its essential characteristics rather a spirit which shows itself at all times, in various degrees, in individual workmen and their work, and the amount of which criticism has to estimate in them taken one by one, than the peculiarity of a time or a school. Depending on the varying proportion of curiosity and the desire of beauty, natural tendencies of the artistic spirit at all times, it must always be partly a matter of individual temperament. The eighteenth century in England has been regarded as almost exclusively a classical period; yet William Blake, a type of so much which

¹To speak subtly.

breaks through what are conventionally thought the influences of that century, is still a noticeable phenomenon in it, and the reaction in favor of naturalism in poetry begins in that century, early. There are, thus, the born romanticists and the born classicists. There are the born classicists who start with *form*, to whose minds the comeliness of the old, immemorial, well-recognized types in art and literature, have revealed themselves impressively; who will entertain no matter which will not go easily and flexibly into them; whose work aspires only to be a variation upon, or study from, the older masters. " 'Tis art's decline, my son!'"¹ they are always saying, to the progressive element in their own generation; to those who care for that which in fifty years' time every one will be caring for. On the other hand, there are the born romanticists, who start with an original, untried *matter*, still in fusion; who conceive this vividly, and hold by it as the essence of their work; who, by the very vividness and heat of their conception, purge away, sooner or later, all that is not organically appropriate to it, till the whole effect adjusts itself in clear, orderly, proportionate form; which form, after a very little time, becomes classical in its turn.

The romantic or classical character of a picture, a poem, a literary work, depends, then, on the balance of certain qualities in it; and in this sense, a very real distinction may be drawn between good classical and good romantic work. But all critical terms are relative; and there is at least a valuable suggestion in that theory of Stendhal's, that all good art was romantic in its day. In the beauties of Homer and Pheidias, quiet as they now seem, there must have been, for those who confronted them for the first time, excitement and surprise, the sudden, unforeseen satisfaction of the desire of beauty. Yet the *Odyssey*, with its marvelous adventure, is more romantic than the *Iliad*, which nevertheless contains, among many other romantic episodes, that of the immortal horses of Achilles, who weep at the death of Patroclus. Æschylus is more romantic than Sophocles, whose *Philoctetes*, were it written now, might figure, for the

strangeness of its motive and the perfectness of its execution, as typically romantic; while, of Euripides, it may be said, that his method in writing his plays is to sacrifice readily almost everything else, so that he may attain the fullness of a single romantic effect. These two tendencies, indeed, might be applied as a measure or standard, all through Greek and Roman art and poetry, with very illuminating results; and for an analyst of the romantic principle in art, no exercise would be more profitable, than to walk through the collection of classical antiquities at the Louvre, or the British Museum, or to examine some representative collection of Greek coins, and note how the element of curiosity, of the love of strangeness, insinuates itself into classical design, and record the effects of the romantic spirit there, the traces of struggle, of the grotesque even, though over-balanced here by sweetness; as in the sculpture of Chartres and Rheims, the real sweetness of mind in the sculptor is often overbalanced by the grotesque, by the rudeness of his strength.

Classicism, then, means for Stendhal, for that younger enthusiastic band of French writers whose unconscious method he formulated into principles, the reign of what is pedantic, conventional, and narrowly academical in art; for him, all good art is romantic. To Sainte-Beuve, who understands the term in a more liberal sense, it is the characteristic of certain epochs, of certain spirits in every epoch, not given to the exercise of original imagination, but rather to the working out of refinements of manner on some authorized matter; and who bring to their perfection, in this way, the elements of sanity, of order and beauty in manner. In general criticism, again, it means the spirit of Greece and Rome, of some phases in literature and art that may seem of equal authority with Greece and Rome, the age of Louis the Fourteenth, the age of Johnson; though this is at best an uncritical use of the term, because in Greek and Roman work there are typical examples of the romantic spirit. But explain the terms as we may, in application to particular epochs, there are these two elements always recognizable; united in perfect art—in Sophocles, in Dante, in

¹Browning, *Fra Lippo Lippi*, 233.

the highest work of Goethe, though not always absolutely balanced there; and these two elements may be not inappropriately termed the classical and romantic tendencies.

Material for the artist, motives of inspiration, are not yet exhausted: our curious, complex, aspiring age still abounds in subjects for æsthetic manipulation by the literary as well as by other forms of art. For the literary art, at all events, the problem just now is, to induce order upon the contorted, proportionless accumulation of our knowledge and experience, our science and history, our hopes and disillusion, and, in effecting this, to do consciously what has been done hitherto for the most part too unconsciously, to write our English language as the Latins wrote theirs, as the French write, as scholars should write. Appealing, as he may, to precedent in this matter, the scholar will still remember that if "the style is the man" it is also the age: that the nineteenth century too will be found to have had its style, justified by necessity—a style very different, alike from the baldness of an impossible "Queen Anne" revival, and an incorrect, incondite exuberance, after the mode of Elizabeth: that we can only return to either at the price of an impoverishment of form or matter, or both, although, an intellectually rich age such as ours being necessarily an eclectic one, we may well cultivate some of the excellences of literary types so different as those: that in literature as in other matters it is well to unite as many diverse elements as may be: that the individual writer or artist, certainly, is to be estimated by the number of graces he combines, and his power of interpenetrating them in a given work. To discriminate schools, of art, of literature, is, of course, part of the obvious business of literary criticism: but, in the work of literary production, it is easy to be overmuch occupied concerning them. For, in truth, the legitimate contention is, not of one age or school of literary art against another, but of all successive schools alike, against the stupidity which is dead to the substance, and the vulgarity which is dead to form.

THE CHILD IN THE HOUSE¹

AS FLORIAN DELEAL walked, one hot afternoon, he overtook by the wayside a poor aged man, and, as he seemed weary with the road, helped him on with the burden which he carried, a certain distance. And as the man told his story, it chanced that he named the place, a little place in the neighborhood of a great city, where Florian had passed his earliest years, but which he had never since seen, and, the story told, went forward on his journey comforted. And that night, like a reward for his pity, a dream of that place came to Florian, a dream which did for him the office of the finer sort of memory, bringing its object to mind with a great clearness, yet, as sometimes happens in dreams, raised a little above itself, and above ordinary retrospect. The true aspect of the place, especially of the house there in which he had lived as a child, the fashion of its doors, its hearths, its windows, the very scent upon the air of it, was with him in sleep for a season; only, with tints more musically blent on wall and floor, and some finer light and shadow running in and out along its curves and angles, and with all its little carvings daintier. He awoke with a sigh at the thought of almost thirty years which lay between him and that place, yet with a flutter of pleasure still within him at the fair light, as if it were a smile, upon it. And it happened that this accident of his dream was just the thing needed for the beginning of a certain design he then had in view, the noting, namely, of some things in the story of his spirit—in that process of brain-building by which we are, each one of us, what we are. With the image of the place so clear and favorable upon him, he fell to thinking of himself therein, and how his thoughts had grown up to him. In that half-spiritualized house he could watch the better, over again, the gradual expansion of the soul which had come to be there—of which indeed, through the law which makes the material objects about them so large an element in children's lives, it had actually

¹Published in *Macmillan's Magazine*, August, 1878, with the title, "Imaginary Portrait. The Child in the House." Reprinted in *Miscellaneous Studies* (1895).

become a part; inward and outward being woven through and through each other into one inextricable texture—half, tint and trace and accident of homely color and form, from the wood and the bricks; half, mere soul-stuff, floated thither from who knows how far. In the house and garden of his dream he saw a child moving, and could divide the main streams at least of the winds that had played on him, and study so the first stage in that mental journey.

The *old house*, as when Florian talked of it afterwards he always called it (as all children do, who can recollect a change of home, soon enough but not too soon to mark a period in their lives), really was an old house; and an element of French descent in its inmates—descent from Watteau, the old court-painter, one of whose gallant pieces still hung in one of the rooms—might explain, together with some other things, a noticeable trimness and comely whiteness about everything there—the curtains, the couches, the paint on the walls with which the light and shadow played so delicately; might explain also the tolerance of the great poplar in the garden, a tree most often despised by English people, but which French people love, having observed a certain fresh way its leaves have of dealing with the wind, making it sound, in never so slight a stirring of the air, like running water.

The old-fashioned, low wainscoting went round the rooms, and up the staircase with carved balusters and shadowy angles, landing half-way up at a broad window, with a swallow's nest below the sill, and the blossom of an old pear-tree showing across it in late April, against the blue, below which the perfumed juice of the find of fallen fruit in autumn was so fresh. At the next turning came the closet which held on its deep shelves the best china. Little angel faces and reedy flutings stood out round the fireplace of the children's room. And on the top of the house, above the large attic, where the white mice ran in the twilight—an infinite, unexplored wonderland of childish treasures, glass beads, empty scent-bottles still sweet, thrum of colored silks, among its lumber—a flat space of roof, railed round, gave a view of the neighboring steeples; for the house, as I said, stood near a great city, which sent up

heavenwards, over the twisting weather-vanes, not seldom, its beds of rolling cloud and smoke, touched with storm or sunshine. But the child of whom I am writing did not hate the fog because of the crimson lights which fell from it sometimes upon the chimneys, and the whites which gleamed through its openings, on summer mornings, on turret or pavement. For it is false to suppose that a child's sense of beauty is dependent on any choiceness or special fineness, in the objects which present themselves to it, though this indeed comes to be the rule with most of us in later life; earlier, in some degree, we see inwardly; and the child finds for itself, and with unstinted delight, a difference for the sense, in those whites and reds through the smoke on very homely buildings, and in the gold of the dandelions at the road-side, just beyond the houses, where not a handful of earth is virgin and untouched, in the lack of better ministries to its desire of beauty.

This house then stood not far beyond the gloom and rumors of the town, among high garden-wall, bright all summer-time with Golden-rod, and brown-and-golden Wall-flower—*Flos Parietis*, as the children's Latin-reading father taught them to call it, while he was with them. Tracing back the threads of his complex spiritual habit, as he was used in after years to do, Florian found that he owed to the place many tones of sentiment afterwards customary with him, certain inward lights under which things most naturally presented themselves to him. The coming and going of travelers to the town along the way, the shadow of the streets, the sudden breath of the neighboring gardens, the singular brightness of bright weather there, its singular darknesses which linked themselves in his mind to certain engraved illustrations in the old big Bible at home, the coolness of the dark, cavernous shops round the great church, with its giddy winding stair up to the pigeons and the bells—a citadel of peace in the heart of the trouble—all this acted on his childish fancy, so that ever afterwards the like aspects and incidents never failed to throw him into a well-recognized imaginative mood, seeming actually to have become a part of the texture of his mind. Also, Florian could trace home to this point a pervading

preference in himself for a kind of comeliness and dignity, an *urbanity* literally, in modes of life, which he connected with the pale people of towns, and which made him susceptible to a kind of exquisite satisfaction in the trimness and well-considered grace of certain things and persons he afterwards met with, here and there, in his way through the world.

So the child of whom I am writing lived on there quietly; things without thus ministering to him, as he sat daily at the window with the birdcage hanging below it, and his mother taught him to read, wondering at the ease with which he learned, and at the quickness of his memory. The perfume of the little flowers of the lime-tree fell through the air upon them like rain; while time seemed to move ever more slowly to the murmur of the bees in it, till it almost stood still on June afternoons. How insignificant, at the moment, seem the influences of the sensible things which are tossed and fall and lie about us, so, or so, in the environment of early childhood. How indelibly, as we afterwards discover, they affect us; with what capricious attractions and associations they figure themselves on the white paper, the smooth wax, of our ingenuous souls, as "with lead in the rock for ever,"¹ giving form and feature, and as it were assigned house-room in our memory, to early experiences of feeling and thought, which abide with us ever afterwards, thus, and not otherwise. The realities and passions, the rumors of the greater world without, steal in upon us, each by its own special little passage-way, through the wall of custom about us; and never afterwards quite detach themselves from this or that accident, or trick, in the mode of their first entrance to us. Our susceptibilities, the discovery of our powers, manifold experiences—our various experiences of the coming and going of bodily pain, for instance—belong to this or the other well-remembered place in the material habitation—that little white room with the window across which the heavy blossoms could beat so peevishly in the wind, with just that particular catch or throb, such a sense of teasing in it, on gusty mornings; and the early habitation

thus gradually becomes a sort of material shrine or sanctuary of sentiment; a system of visible symbolism interweaves itself through all our thoughts and passions; and irresistibly, little shapes, voices, accidents—the angle at which the sun in the morning fell on the pillow—become parts of the great chain wherewith we are bound.

Thus far, for Florian, what all this had determined was a peculiarly strong sense of home—so forcible a motive with all of us—prompting to us our customary love of the earth, and the larger part of our fear of death, that revulsion we have from it, as from something strange, untried, unfriendly; though life-long imprisonment, they tell you, and final banishment from home is a thing bitter still; the looking forward to but a short space, a mere childish *gouter*² and dessert of it, before the end, being so great a resource of effort to pilgrims and wayfarers, and the soldier in distant quarters, and lending, in lack of that, some power of solace to the thought of sleep in the home churchyard, at least—dead cheek by dead cheek, and with the rain soaking in upon one from above.

So powerful is this instinct, and yet accidents like those I have been speaking of so mechanically determine it; its essence being indeed the early familiar, as constituting our ideal, or typical conception, of rest and security. Out of so many possible conditions, just this for you and that for me, brings ever the unmistakable realization of the delightful *chez soi*;³ this for the Englishman, for me and you, with the closely-drawn white curtain and the shaded lamp; that, quite other, for the wandering Arab, who folds his tent every morning, and makes his sleeping-place among haunted ruins, or in old tombs.

With Florian then the sense of home became singularly intense, his good fortune being that the special character of his home was in itself so essentially home-like. As after many wanderings I have come to fancy that some parts of Surrey and Kent are, for Englishmen, the true landscape, true home-counties, by right, partly, of a certain earthy warmth in the yellow of the sand

²Luncheon.

³Homelikeness (at one's home).

below their gorse-bushes, and of a certain gray-blue mist after rain, in the hollows of the hills there, welcome to fatigued eyes, and never seen farther south; so I think that the sort of house I have described, with precisely those proportions of red-brick and green, and with a just perceptible monotony in the subdued order of it, for its distinguishing note, is for Englishmen at least typically home-like. And so for Florian that general human instinct was reinforced by this special home-likeness in the place his wandering soul had happened to light on, as, in the second degree, its body and earthly tabernacle; the sense of harmony between his soul and its physical environment became, for a time at least, like perfectly played music, and the life led there singularly tranquil and filled with a curious sense of self-possession. The love of security, of an habitually undisputed standing-ground or sleeping-place, came to count for much in the generation and correcting of his thoughts, and afterwards as a salutary principle of restraint in all his wanderings of spirit. The wistful yearning towards home, in absence from it, as the shadows of evening deepened, and he followed in thought what was doing there from hour to hour, interpreted to him much of a yearning and regret he experienced afterwards, towards he knew not what, out of strange ways of feeling and thought in which, from time to time, his spirit found itself alone; and in the tears shed in such absences there seemed always to be some soul-subduing foretaste of what his last tears might be.

And the sense of security could hardly have been deeper, the quiet of the child's soul being one with the quiet of its home, a place "inclosed" and "sealed." But upon this assured place, upon the child's assured soul which resembled it, there came floating in from the larger world without, as at windows left ajar unknowingly, or over the high garden walls, two streams of impressions, the sentiments of beauty and pain—recognitions of the visible, tangible, audible loveliness of things, as a very real and somewhat tyrannous element in them—and of the sorrow of the world, of grown people and children and animals, as a thing not to be put by in them. From this point he could trace two predominant proc-

esses of mental change in him—the growth of an almost diseased sensibility to the spectacle of suffering, and, parallel with this, the rapid growth of a certain capacity of fascination by bright color and choice form—the sweet curvings, for instance, of the lips of those who seemed to him comely persons, modulated in such delicate unison to the things they said or sang,—marking early the activity in him of a more than customary sensuousness, "the lust of the eye," as the Preacher¹ says, which might lead him, one day, how far! Could he have foreseen the weariness of the way! In music sometimes the two sorts of impressions came together, and he would weep, to the surprise of older people. Tears of joy too the child knew, also to older people's surprise; real tears, once, of relief from long-strung, childish expectation, when he found returned at evening, with new roses in her cheeks, the little sister who had been to a place where there was a wood, and brought back for him a treasure of fallen acorns, and black crow's feathers, and his peace at finding her again near him mingled all night with some intimate sense of the distant forest, the rumor of its breezes, with the glossy black-birds aslant and the branches lifted in them, and of the perfect nicety of the little cups that fell. So those two elementary apprehensions of the tenderness and of the color in things grew apace in him, and were seen by him afterwards to send their roots back into the beginnings of life.

Let me note first some of the occasions of his recognition of the element of pain in things—incidents, now and again, which seemed suddenly to awake in him the whole force of that sentiment which Goethe has called the *Weltschmerz*, and in which the concentrated sorrow of the world seemed suddenly to lie heavy upon him. A book lay in an old book-case, of which he cared to remember one picture—a woman sitting, with hands bound behind her, the dress, the cap, the hair, folded with a simplicity which touched him strangely, as if not by her own hands, but with some ambiguous care at the hands of others—Queene Marie Antoinette, on her way to execution—we all

¹Ecclesiastes. There are several passages which might have suggested the quoted phrase to Pater, but its words are his own.

remember David's¹ drawing, meant merely to make her ridiculous. The face that had been so high had learned to be mute and resistless; but out of its very resistlessness, seemed now to call on men to have pity, and forbear; and he took note of that, as he closed the book, as a thing to look at again, if he should at any time find himself tempted to be cruel. Again, he would never quite forget the appeal in the small sister's face, in the garden under the lilacs, terrified at a spider lighted on her sleeve. He could trace back to the look then noted a certain mercy he conceived always for people in fear, even of little things, which seemed to make him, though but for a moment, capable of almost any sacrifice of himself. Impressible, susceptible persons, indeed, who had had their sorrows, lived about him; and this sensibility was due in part to the tacit influence of their presence, enforcing upon him habitually the fact that there are those who pass their days, as a matter of course, in a sort of "going quietly." Most poignantly of all he could recall, in unfading minutest circumstance, the cry on the stair, sounding bitterly through the house, and struck into his soul for ever, of an aged woman, his father's sister, come now to announce his death in distant India; how it seemed to make the aged woman like a child again; and, he knew not why, but this fancy was full of pity to him. There were the little sorrows of the dumb animals too—of the white angora, with a dark tail like an ermine's, and a face like a flower, who fell into a lingering sickness, and became quite delicately human in its valetudinarianism, and came to have a hundred different expressions of voice—how it grew worse and worse, till it began to feel the light too much for it, and at last, after one wild morning of pain, the little soul flickered away from the body, quite worn to death already, and now but feebly retaining it.

So he wanted another pet; and as there were starlings about the place, which could be taught to speak, one of them was caught, and he meant to treat it kindly; but in the night its young ones could be heard crying after it, and the responsive cry of the mother-

bird towards them; and at last, with the first light, though not till after some debate with himself, he went down and opened the cage, and saw a sharp bound of the prisoner up to her nestlings; and therewith came the sense of remorse,—that he too was become an accomplice in moving, to the limit of his small power, the springs and handles of that great machine in things, constructed so ingeniously to play pain-fugues on the delicate nerve-work of living creatures.

I have remarked how, in the process of our brain-building, as the house of thought in which we live gets itself together, like some airy bird's-nest of floating thistle-down and chance straws, compact at last, little accidents have their consequence; and thus it happened that, as he walked one evening, a garden gate, usually closed, stood open; and lo! within, a great red hawthorn in full flower, embossing heavily the bleached and twisted trunk and branches, so aged that there were but a few green leaves thereon—a plumage of tender, crimson fire out of the heart of the dry wood. The perfume of the tree had now and again reached him, in the currents of the wind, over the wall, and he had wondered what might be behind it, and was now allowed to fill his arms with the flowers—flowers enough for all the old blue-china pots along the chimney-piece, making *fête* in the children's room. Was it some periodic moment in the expansion of soul within him, or mere trick of heat in the heavily-laden summer air? But the beauty of the thing struck home to him feverishly; and in dreams all night he loitered along a magic roadway of crimson flowers, which seemed to open ruddily in thick, fresh masses about his feet, and fill softly all the little hollows in the banks on either side. Always afterwards summer by summer, as the flowers came on, the blossom of the red hawthorn still seemed to him absolutely the reddest of all things; and the goodly crimson, still alive in the works of old Venetian masters or old Flemish tapestries, called out always from afar the recollection of the flame in those perishing little petals, as it pulsed gradually out of them, kept long in the drawers of an old cabinet. Also then, for the first time, he seemed to experience a passionateness in his relation to fair

¹Jacques Louis David (1748-1825), court-painter to Louis XVI, supporter of the Revolution, and court-painter to Napoleon.

outward objects, an inexplicable excitement in their presence, which disturbed him, and from which he half longed to be free. A touch of regret or desire mingled all night with the remembered presence of the red flowers, and their perfume in the darkness about him; and the longing for some undivided, entire possession of them was the beginning of a revelation to him, growing ever clearer, with the coming of the gracious summer guise of fields and trees and persons in each succeeding year, of a certain, at times seemingly exclusive, predominance in his interests, of beautiful physical things, a kind of tyranny of the senses over him.

In later years he came upon philosophies which occupied him much in the estimate of the proportion of the sensuous and the ideal elements in human knowledge, the relative parts they bear in it; and, in his intellectual scheme, was led to assign very little to the abstract thought, and much to its sensible vehicle or occasion. Such metaphysical speculation did but reinforce what was instinctive in his way of receiving the world, and for him, everywhere, that sensible vehicle or occasion became, perhaps only too surely, the necessary concomitant of any perception of things, real enough to be of any weight or reckoning, in his house of thought. There were times when he could think of the necessity he was under of associating all thoughts to touch and sight, as a sympathetic link between himself and actual, feeling, living objects; a protest in favor of real men and women against mere gray, unreal abstractions; and he remembered gratefully how the Christian religion, hardly less than the religion of the ancient Greeks, translating so much of its spiritual verity into things that may be seen, condescends in part to sanction this infirmity, if so it be, of our human existence, wherein the world of sense is so much with us, and welcomed this thought as a kind of keeper and sentinel over his soul therein. But certainly, he came more and more to be unable to care for, or think of soul but as in an actual body, or of any world but that wherein are water and trees, and where men and women look, so or so, and press actual hands. It was the trick even his pity learned, fastening those who suffered in anywise to his affections by a kind of sensible

attachments. He would think of Julian fallen into incurable sickness, as spoiled in the sweet blossom of his skin like pale amber, and his honey-like hair; of Cecil early dead, as cut off from the lilies, from golden summer days, from women's voices; and then what comforted him a little was the thought of the turning of the child's flesh to violets in the turf above him. And thinking of the very poor, it was not the things which most men care most for that he yearned to give them; but fairer roses, perhaps, and power to taste quite as they will, at their ease and not task-burdened, a certain desirable, clear light in the new morning through which sometimes he had noticed them, quite unconscious of it, on their way to their early toil.

So he yielded himself to these things, to be played upon by them like a musical instrument, and began to note with deepening watchfulness, but always with some puzzled unutterable longing in his enjoyment, the phases of the seasons and of the growing or waning day, down even to the shadowy changes wrought on bare wall or ceiling—the light cast up from the snow, bringing out their darkest angles; the brown light in the cloud, which meant rain; that almost too austere clearness, in the protracted light of the lengthening day, before warm weather began, as if it lingered but to make a severer workday, with the school-books opened earlier and later; that beam of June sunshine, at last, as he lay awake before the time, a way of gold-dust across the darkness; all the humming, the freshness, the perfume of the garden seemed to lie upon it—and coming in one afternoon in September, along the red gravel walk, to look for a basket of yellow crab-apples left in the cool, old parlor, he remembered it the more, and how the colors struck upon him, because a wasp on one bitter apple stung him, and he felt the passion of sudden, severe pain. For this too brought its curious reflections; and, in relief from it, he would wonder over it—how it had then been with him—puzzled at the depth of the charm or spell over him, which lay, for a little while at least, in the mere absence of pain; once, especially, when an older boy taught him to make flowers of sealing-wax, and he had burned his hand badly at the

lighted taper, and been unable to sleep. He remembered that also afterwards, as a sort of typical thing—a white vision of heat about him, clinging closely, through the languid scent of the ointments put upon the place to make it well.

Also, as he felt this pressure upon him of the sensible world, then, as often afterwards, there would come another sort of curious questioning how the last impressions of eye and ear might happen to him, how they would find him—the scent of the last flower, the soft yellowness of the last morning, the last recognition of some object of affection, hand or voice; it could not be but that the latest look of the eyes, before their final closing, would be strangely vivid; one would go with the hot tears, the cry, the touch of the wistful bystander, impressed how deeply on one! or would it be, perhaps, a mere frail retiring of all things, great or little, away from one, into a level distance?

For with this desire of physical beauty mingled itself early the fear of death—the fear of death intensified by the desire of beauty. Hitherto he had never gazed upon dead faces, as sometimes, afterwards, at the *Morgue* in Paris, or in that fair cemetery at Munich, where all the dead must go and lie in state before burial, behind glass windows, among the flowers and incense and holy candles—the aged clergy with their sacred ornaments, the young men in their dancing-shoes and spotless white linen—after which visits, those waxen resistless faces would always live with him for many days, making the broadest sunshine sickly. The child had heard indeed of the death of his father, and how, in the Indian station, a fever had taken him, so that though not in action he had yet died as a soldier; and hearing of the “resurrection of the just,”¹ he could think of him as still abroad in the world, somehow, for his protection—a grand, though perhaps rather terrible figure, in beautiful soldier’s things, like the figure in the picture of Joshua’s Vision in the Bible²—and of that, round which the mourners moved so softly, and afterwards with such solemn singing, as but a worn-out garment left at a deserted lodging. So it was, until

on a summer day he walked with his mother through a fair churchyard. In a bright dress he rambled among the graves, in the gay weather, and so came, in one corner, upon an open grave for a child—a dark space on the brilliant grass—the black mold lying heaped up round it, weighing down the little jeweled branches of the dwarf rose-bushes in flower. And therewith came, full-grown, never wholly to leave him, with the certainty that even children do sometimes die, the physical horror of death, with its wholly selfish recoil from the association of lower forms of life, and the suffocating weight above. No benign, grave figure in beautiful soldier’s things any longer abroad in the world for his protection! only a few poor, piteous bones; and above them, possibly, a certain sort of figure he hoped not to see. For sitting one day in the garden below an open window, he heard people talking, and could not but listen, how, in a sleepless hour, a sick woman had seen one of the dead sitting beside her, come to call her hence; and from the broken talk evolved with much clearness the notion that not all those dead people had really departed to the churchyard, nor were quite so motionless as they looked, but led a secret, half-fugitive life in their old homes, quite free by night, though sometimes visible in the day, dodging from room to room, with no great goodwill towards those who shared the place with them. All night the figure sat beside him in the reveries of his broken sleep, and was not quite gone in the morning—an odd, irreconcilable new member of the household, making the sweet familiar chambers unfriendly and suspect by its uncertain presence. He could have hated the dead he had pitied so, for being thus. Afterwards he came to think of those poor, home-returning ghosts, which all men have fancied to themselves—the *revenants*—pathetically, as crying, or beating with vain hands at the doors, as the wind came, their cries distinguishable in it as a wilder inner note. But, always making death more unfamiliar still, that old experience would ever, from time to time, return to him; even in the living he sometimes caught its likeness; at any time or place, in a moment, the faint atmosphere of the chamber of death would be breathed around him, and the image

¹St. Luke, xiv, 14.

²Joshua, v, 13-14.

with the bound chin, the quaint smile, the straight, stiff feet, shed itself across the air upon the bright carpet, amid the gayest company, or happiest communing with himself.

To most children the somber questionings to which impressions like these attach themselves, if they come at all, are actually suggested by religious books, which therefore they often regard with much secret distaste, and dismiss, as far as possible, from their habitual thoughts as a too depressing element in life. To Florian such impressions, these misgivings as to the ultimate tendency of the years, of the relationship between life and death, had been suggested spontaneously in the natural course of his mental growth by a strong innate sense for the soberer tones in things, further strengthened by actual circumstances; and religious sentiment, that system of biblical ideas in which he had been brought up, presented itself to him as a thing that might soften and dignify, and light up as with a "lively hope,"¹ a melancholy already deeply settled in him. So he yielded himself easily to religious impressions, and with a kind of mystical appetite for sacred things; the more as they came to him through a saintly person who loved him tenderly, and believed that this early pre-occupation with them already marked the child out for a saint. He began to love, for their own sakes, church lights, holy days, all that belonged to the comely order of the sanctuary, the secrets of its white linen, and holy vessels, and fonts of pure water; and its hieratic purity and simplicity became the type of something he desired always to have about him in actual life. He pored over the pictures in religious books, and knew by heart the exact mode in which the wrestling angel grasped Jacob, how Jacob looked in his mysterious sleep, how the bells and pomegranates were attached to the hem of Aaron's vestment,² sounding sweetly as he glided over the turf of the holy place. His way of conceiving religion came then to be in effect what it ever afterwards remained—a sacred history indeed, but still more a sacred ideal, a transcendent version or representation,

under intenser and more expressive light and shade, of human life and its familiar or exceptional incidents, birth, death, marriage, youth, age, tears, joy, rest, sleep, waking—a mirror, towards which men might turn away their eyes from vanity and dullness, and see themselves therein as angels, with their daily meat and drink, even, become a kind of sacred transaction—a complementary strain or burden,³ applied to our every-day existence, whereby the stray snatches of music in it re-set themselves, and fall into the scheme of some higher and more consistent harmony. A place adumbrated itself in his thoughts, wherein those sacred personalities, which are at once the reflex and the pattern of our nobler phases of life, housed themselves; and this region in his intellectual scheme all subsequent experience did but tend still further to realize and define. Some ideal, hieratic persons he would always need to occupy it and keep a warmth there. And he could hardly understand those who felt no such need at all, finding themselves quite happy without such heavenly companionship, and sacred double of their life, beside them.

Thus a constant substitution of the typical for the actual took place in his thoughts. Angels might be met by the way, under English elm or beech-tree; mere messengers seemed like angels, bound on celestial errands; a deep mysticity brooded over real meetings and partings; marriages were made in heaven; and deaths also, with hands of angels thereupon, to bear soul and body quietly asunder, each to its appointed rest. All the acts and accidents of daily life borrowed a sacred color and significance; the very colors of things became themselves weighty with meanings like the sacred stuffs of Moses' tabernacle,⁴ full of penitence or peace. Sentiment, congruous in the first instance only with those divine transactions, the deep, effusive unction of the House of Bethany, was assumed as the due attitude for the reception of our every-day existence; and for a time he walked through the world in a sustained, not unpleasurable awe, generated by the habitual recognition, beside every cir-

¹ 1 Peter, i, 3.

² Genesis, xxxiii, 24; xxviii, 11; Exodus, xxviii, 33.

³ Bass under-part.

⁴ Exodus, xxvi.

cumstance and event of life, of its celestial correspondent.

Sensibility—the desire of physical beauty—a strange biblical awe, which made any reference to the unseen act on him like solemn music—these qualities the child took away with him, when, at about the age of twelve years, he left the old house, and was taken to live in another place. He had never left home before, and, anticipating much from this change, had long dreamed over it, jealously counting the days till the time fixed for departure should come; had been a little careless about others even, in his strong desire for it—when Lewis fell sick, for instance, and they must wait still two days longer. At last the morning came, very fine; and all things—the very pavement with its dust, at the roadside—seemed to have a white, pearl-like luster in them. They were to travel by a favorite road on which he had often walked a certain distance, and on one of those two prisoner days, when Lewis was sick, had walked farther than

ever before, in his great desire to reach the new place. They had started and gone a little way when a pet bird was found to have been left behind, and must even now—so it presented itself to him—have already all the appealing fierceness and wild self-pity at heart of one left by the others to perish of hunger in a closed house; and he returned to fetch it, himself in hardly less stormy distress. But as he passed in search of it from room to room, lying so pale, with a look of meekness in their denudation, and at last through that little, stripped white room, the aspect of the place touched him like the face of one dead; and a clinging back towards it came over him, so intense that he knew it would last long, and spoiling all his pleasure in the realization of a thing so eagerly anticipated. And so, with the bird found, but himself in an agony of homesickness, thus capriciously sprung up within him, he was driven quickly away, far into the rural distance, so fondly speculated on, of that favorite country-road.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (1850-1894)

Stevenson was born in Edinburgh on 13 November, 1850. He was the only child of his parents, and his health was infirm from the beginning of his life. Through his boyhood and youth he suffered from frequent bronchial affections and acute nervous excitability, and was thus prevented from getting much regular or continuous schooling. From 1862 until 1867 he spent much time in travel on the Continent. In the latter year he entered Edinburgh University and for several years attended classes there with such regularity as his health permitted. He read widely, but did not give much attention to routine college studies. He came of a family of distinguished engineers and was expected to follow this profession. Some of his university studies were directed to this end, but in 1871 his family agreed that his health would not allow of his becoming an engineer, and concluded that he should study the law. He accordingly did study the law in a desultory fashion and was called to the bar in 1875, but he never attempted to practise. Outwardly his life had been hitherto, and was still to be for several years, that of a semi-invalid and idler, but in reality Stevenson was attempting with the utmost industry to learn the art of writing. And in 1876 the fruits of his industry began to appear, in the shape of a series of essays contributed to the *Cornhill Magazine*. Two years later his first book was published, *An Inland Voyage*, an account of a canoe-trip in Belgium and France. A few critical readers, such as Leslie Stephen, promptly recognized Stevenson's promise, perceiving that he "aimed at, and often achieved, those qualities of sustained precision, lucidity, and grace of style which are characteristic of the best French prose, but in English rare in the extreme. He had known how to stamp all he wrote with the impress of a vivid personal charm; had shown himself a master of the apt and animated phrase; and, whether in tale or parable, essay or wayside musing, had touched on vital points of experience and feeling with the observation and insight of a true poet and humorist" (S. Colvin, *D. N. B.*). Nevertheless Stevenson did not for several years win a large audience, and then did so, in 1882, with a story written for boys, *Treasure Island*.

Meanwhile Stevenson had met in France Mrs. Fanny Osbourne, an American woman then separated from her husband. In 1878 Mrs. Osbourne went to California and in the following year Stevenson determined to follow her. The journey was exceedingly hard on him and would probably have cost him his life had it not been for the careful nursing of Mrs. Osbourne. By 1880 Mrs. Osbourne had secured a divorce from her husband and was married to Stevenson, who took her back to his home in Scotland in August of that year. She herself had delicate health, but she proved a perfect companion for Stevenson and was through the remainder of his life his devoted nurse. His nurse—for Stevenson never won his battle against consumption, but only delayed the end while he continued, despite all ills to write, and write, and write. For several years he continued to seek health, or at least a respite from his disease, at various places in Europe, and then in 1887 sailed for America on the same quest. He spent the winter of 1887-1888 at Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks. In the following June he sailed from San Francisco on a voyage among the island groups of the South Sea; and there he established himself in Samoa, where he remained until his death on 4 December, 1894.

Stevenson's life was one of heroic endeavor in the face of constant illness, with the threat of death ever hovering above him. A few of his many books, in addition to those mentioned above, are: *Travels with a Donkey* (1879), *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881), *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (1882), *The New Arabian Nights* (1882), *Kidnapped* (1886), *Memories and Portraits* (1887), *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889), and *Across the Plains* (1892).

AN APOLOGY FOR IDLERS¹

BOSWELL: We grow weary when idle.

JOHNSON: That is, sir, because others being busy, we want company; but if we were idle, there would be no growing weary; we should all entertain one another.²

JUST now, when every one is bound, under pain of a decree in absence convicting them of *lèse-respectability*, to enter on some

lucrative profession, and labor therein with something not far short of enthusiasm, a cry from the opposite party who are content when they have enough, and like to look on and enjoy in the meanwhile, savors a little of bravado and gasconade. And yet this

¹Published in 1877; reprinted in the volume entitled *Virginibus Puerisque*. This and the two following pieces by Stevenson are here reprinted with the permission of Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons.

²Boswell's *Johnson* (Hill's edition), II, 98.

should not be. Idleness so called, which does not consist in doing nothing, but in doing a great deal not recognized in the dogmatic formularies of the ruling class, has as good a right to state its position as industry itself. It is admitted that the presence of people who refuse to enter in the great handicap race for sixpenny pieces, is at once an insult and a disenchantment for those who do. A fine fellow (as we see so many) takes his determination, votes for the sixpences, and in the emphatic Americanism, "goes for" them. And while such a one is ploughing distressfully up the road, it is not hard to understand his resentment, when he perceives cool persons in the meadows by the wayside, lying with a handkerchief over their ears and a glass at their elbow. Alexander is touched in a very delicate place by the disregard of Diogenes. Where was the glory of having taken Rome for these tumultuous barbarians, who poured into the Senate house, and found the Fathers sitting silent and unmoved by their success? It is a sore thing to have labored along and scaled the arduous hilltops, and when all is done, find humanity indifferent to your achievement. Hence physicists condemn the unphysical; financiers have only a superficial toleration for those who know little of stocks; literary persons despise the unlettered; and people of all pursuits combine to disparage those who have none.

But though this is one difficulty of the subject, it is not the greatest. You could not be put in prison for speaking against industry, but you can be sent to Coventry for speaking like a fool. The greatest difficulty with most subjects is to do them well; therefore, please to remember this is an apology. It is certain that much may be judiciously argued in favor of diligence; only there is something to be said against it, and that is what, on the present occasion, I have to say. To state one argument is not necessarily to be deaf to all others, and that a man has written a book of travels in Montenegro, is no reason why he should never have been to Richmond.

It is surely beyond a doubt that people should be a good deal idle in youth. For though here and there a Lord Macaulay may escape from school honors with all his wits about him, most boys pay so dear for

their medals that they never afterward have a shot in their locker, and begin the world bankrupt. And the same holds true during all the time a lad is educating himself, or suffering others to educate him. It must have been a very foolish old gentleman who addressed Johnson at Oxford in these words: "Young man, ply your book diligently now, and acquire a stock of knowledge; for when years come upon you, you will find that poring upon books will be but an irksome task." The old gentleman seems to have been unaware that many other things besides reading grow irksome, and not a few become impossible, by the time a man has to use spectacles and cannot walk without a stick. Books are good enough in their own way, but they are a mighty bloodless substitute for life. It seems a pity to sit, like the Lady of Shalott, peering into a mirror, with your back turned on all the bustle and glamor of reality. And if a man reads very hard, as the old anecdote reminds us, he will have little time for thoughts.

If you look back on your own education, I am sure it will not be the full, vivid, instructive hours of truancy that you regret; you would rather cancel some lack-luster periods between sleep and waking in the class. For my own part, I have attended a good many lectures in my time. I still remember that the spinning of a top is a case of kinetic stability. I still remember that emphyteusis¹ is not a disease, nor stillicide² a crime. But though I would not willingly part with such scraps of science, I do not set the same store by them as by certain other odds and ends that I came by in the open street while I was playing truant. This is not the moment to dilate on that mighty place of education, which was the favorite school of Dickens and of Balzac, and turns out yearly many inglorious masters in the science of the Aspects of Life. Suffice it to say this: if a lad does not learn in the streets, it is because he has no faculty of

¹A kind of conditional grant of a right to the possession and enjoyment of land.

²A continual falling or succession of drops. In Roman law, the right to have rain from one's roof drop on another's land or roof, or the right to refuse to allow rain from another's roof to drop on one's own land or roof.

learning. Nor is the truant always in the streets, for if he prefers, he may go out by the gardened suburbs into the country. He may pitch on some tuft of lilacs over a burn, and smoke innumerable pipes to the tune of the water on the stones. A bird will sing in the thicket. And there he may fall into a vein of kindly thought, and see things in a new perspective. Why, if this be not education, what is? We may conceive Mr. Worldly Wiseman accosting such a one, and the conversation that should thereupon ensue:

"How, now, young fellow, what dost thou here?"

"Truly, sir, I take mine ease."

"Is this not the hour of the class? and should'st thou not be plying thy book with diligence, to the end thou mayest obtain knowledge?"

"Nay, but thus also I follow after learning, by your leave."

"Learning, quotha! After what fashion, I pray thee? Is it mathematics?"

"No, to be sure."

"Is it metaphysics?"

"Nor that."

"Is it some language?"

"Nay, it is no language."

"Is it a trade?"

"Nor a trade neither."

"Why, then, what is't?"

"Indeed, sir, as a time may come soon for me to go upon pilgrimage, I am desirous to note what is commonly done by persons in my case, and where are the ugliest sloughs and thickets on the road; as also, what manner of staff is of the best service. Moreover, I lie here, by this water, to learn by root-of-heart a lesson which my master teaches me to call peace, or contentment."

Hereupon Mr. Worldly Wiseman was much commoved with passion, and shaking his cane with a very threatful countenance, broke forth upon this wise: "Learning, quotha!" said he; "I would have all such rogues scourged by the hangman!"

And so he would go his way, ruffling out his cravat with a crackle of starch, like a turkey when it spreads its feathers.

Now this, of Mr. Wiseman's, is the common opinion. A fact is not called a fact, but a piece of gossip, if it does not fall into one of your scholastic categories.

An inquiry must be in some acknowledged direction, with a name to go by; or else you are not inquiring at all, only lounging; and the workhouse is too good for you. It is supposed that all knowledge is at the bottom of a well, or the far end of a telescope. Sainte-Beuve, as he grew older, came to regard all experience as a single great book, in which to study for a few years ere we go hence; and it seemed all one to him whether you should read in Chapter xx, which is the differential calculus, or in Chapter xxxix, which is hearing the band play in the gardens. As a matter of fact, an intelligent person, looking out of his eyes and hearkening in his ears, with a smile on his face all the time, will get more true education than many another in a life of heroic vigils. There is certainly some chill and arid knowledge to be found upon the summits of formal and laborious science; but it is all round about you, and for the trouble of looking, that you will acquire the warm and palpitating facts of life. While others are filling their memory with a lumber of words, one-half of which they will forget before the week be out, your truant may learn some really useful art: to play the fiddle, to know a good cigar, or to speak with ease and opportunity to all varieties of men. Many who have "plied their book diligently," and know all about some one branch or another of accepted lore, come out of the study with an ancient and owl-like demeanor, and prove dry, stockish, and dyspeptic in all the better and brighter parts of life. Many make a large fortune, who remain underbred and pathetically stupid to the last. And meantime there goes the idler, who began life along with them—by your leave, a different picture. He has had time to take care of his health and his spirits; he has been a great deal in the open air, which is the most salutary of all things for both body and mind; and if he has never read the great Book in very recondite places, he has dipped into it and skimmed it over to excellent purpose. Might not the student afford some Hebrew roots, and the business man some of his half-crowns, for a share of the idler's knowledge of life at large, and Art of Living? Nay, and the idler has another and more important quality than these. I mean his

wisdom. He who has much looked on at the childish satisfaction of other people in their hobbies, will regard his own with only a very ironical indulgence. He will not be heard among the dogmatists. He will have a great and cool allowance for all sorts of people and opinions. If he finds no out-of-the-way truths, he will identify himself with no very burning falsehood. His way takes him along a by-road, not much frequented, but very even and pleasant, which is called Commonplace Lane, and leads to the Belvedere¹ of Common-sense. Thence he shall command an agreeable, if no very noble prospect; and while others behold the East and West, the Devil and the sunrise, he will be contentedly aware of a sort of morning hour upon all sublunary things, with an army of shadows running speedily and in many different directions into the great daylight of eternity. The shadows and the generations, the shrill doctors and the plangent wars, go by into ultimate silence and emptiness; but underneath all this, a man may see, out of the Belvedere windows, much green and peaceful landscape; many firelit parlors; good people laughing, drinking, and making love as they did before the Flood or the French Revolution; and the old shepherd telling his tale under the hawthorn.

Extreme *busyness*, whether at school or college, kirk or market, is a symptom of deficient vitality; and a faculty for idleness implies a catholic appetite and a strong sense of personal identity. There is a sort of dead-alive, hackneyed people about, who are scarcely conscious of living except in the exercise of some conventional occupation. Bring these fellows into the country, or set them aboard ship, and you will see how they pine for their desk or their study. They have no curiosity; they cannot give themselves over to random provocations; they do not take pleasure in the exercise of their faculties for its own sake; and unless necessity lays about them with a stick, they will even stand still. It is no good speaking to such folk: they *cannot* be idle, their nature is not generous enough; and they pass those hours in a sort of coma, which are not dedicated to furious moiling in the gold-

mill. When they do not require to go to the office, when they are not hungry and have no mind to drink, the whole breathing world is a blank to them. If they have to wait an hour or so for a train, they fall into a stupid trance with their eyes open. To see them, you would suppose there was nothing to look at and no one to speak with; you would imagine they were paralyzed or alienated;² and yet very possibly they are hard workers in their own way, and have good eyesight for a flaw in a deed or a turn of the market. They have been to school and college, but all the time they had their eye on the medal; they have gone about in the world and mixed with clever people, but all the time they were thinking of their own affairs. As if a man's soul were not too small to begin with, they have dwarfed and narrowed theirs by a life of all work and no play; until here they are at forty, with a listless attention, a mind vacant of all material of amusement, and not one thought to rub against another while they wait for the train. Before he was breeched, he might have clambered on the boxes; when he was twenty, he would have stared at the girls; but now the pipe is smoked out, the snuffbox empty, and my gentleman sits bolt upright upon a bench, with lamentable eyes. This does not appeal to me as being Success in Life.

But it is not only the person himself who suffers from his busy habits, but his wife and children, his friends and relations, and down to the very people he sits with in a railway carriage or an omnibus. Perpetual devotion to what a man calls his business is only to be sustained by perpetual neglect of many other things. And it is not by any means certain that a man's business is the most important thing he has to do. To an impartial estimate it will seem clear that many of the wisest, most virtuous, and most beneficent parts that are to be played upon the theater of life are filled by gratuitous performers, and pass, among the world at large, as phases of idleness. For in that theater, not only the walking gentlemen, singing chambermaids, and diligent fiddlers in the orchestra, but those who look on and clap their hands from the benches, do really play a part and fulfill im-

¹A building commanding a fine prospect.

²Mentally deranged.

portant offices towards the general result. You are no doubt very dependent on the care of your lawyer and stockbroker, of the guards and signalmen who convey you rapidly from place to place, and the policemen who walk the streets for your protection; but is there not a thought of gratitude in your heart for certain other benefactors who set you smiling when they fall in your way, or season your dinner with good company? Colonel Newcome helped to lose his friend's money; Fred Bayham had an ugly trick of borrowing shirts; and yet they were better people to fall among than Mr. Barnes.¹ And though Falstaff was neither sober nor very honest, I think I could name one or two long-faced Barabbases² whom the world could better have done without. Hazlitt mentions that he was more sensible of obligation to Northcote,³ who had never done him anything he could call a service, than to his whole circle of ostentatious friends; for he thought a good companion emphatically the greatest benefactor. I know there are people in the world who cannot feel grateful unless the favor has been done them at the cost of pain and difficulty. But this is a churlish disposition. A man may send you six sheets of letter-paper covered with the most entertaining gossip, or you may pass half an hour pleasantly, perhaps profitably, over an article of his; do you think the service would be greater, if he had made the manuscript in his heart's blood, like a compact with the devil? Do you really fancy you should be more beholden to your correspondent, if he had been damning you all the while for for your importunity? Pleasures are more beneficial than duties because, like the quality of mercy, they are not strained,⁴ and they are twice blest. There must always be two to a kiss, and there may be a score in a jest; but wherever there is an element of sacrifice, the favor is conferred with pain; and, among generous people, received with confusion. There is no duty

we so much underrate as the duty of being happy. By being happy, we sow anonymous benefits upon the world, which remain unknown even to ourselves, or when they are disclosed, surprise nobody so much as the benefactor. The other day, a ragged, barefoot boy ran down the street after a marble, with so jolly an air that he set every one he passed into a good-humor; one of these persons, who had been delivered from more than usually black thoughts, stopped the little fellow and gave him some money with this remark: "You see what sometimes comes of looking pleased." If he had looked pleased before, he had now to look both pleased and mystified. For my part, I justify this encouragement of smiling rather than tearful children; I do not wish to pay for tears anywhere but upon the stage; but I am prepared to deal largely in the opposite commodity. A happy man or woman is a better thing to find than a five-pound note. He or she is a radiating focus of good-will; and their entrance into a room is as though another candle had been lighted. We need not care whether they could prove the forty-seventh proposition;⁵ they do a better thing than that, they practically demonstrate the great theorem of the Livableness of Life. Consequently, if a person cannot be happy without remaining idle, idle he should remain. It is a revolutionary precept; but thanks to hunger and the workhouse, one not easily to be abused; and within practical limits, it is one of the most incontestable truths in the whole body of morality. Look at one of your industrious fellows for a moment, I beseech you. He sows hurry and reaps indigestion; he puts a vast deal of activity out to interest, and receives a large measure of nervous derangement in return. Either he absents himself entirely from all fellowship, and lives a recluse in a garret, with carpet slippers and a leaden inkpot; or he comes among people swiftly and bitterly, in a contraction of his whole nervous system, to discharge some temper before he returns to work. I do not care how much or how well he works, this fellow is an evil feature in other people's lives. They would be happier if he were dead. They could easier do

¹Characters in Thackeray's *Newcomes*.

²Falstaff appears in *Henry IV*, I and II, and in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Barabbas was the robber whose freedom, instead of that of Jesus, the Jews demanded of Pilate.

³James Northcote (1746-1831), painter and writer.

⁴See *The Merchant of Venice*, IV, i, 184.

⁵Of Bk. I, Euclid's *Elements*—the Pythagorean theorem.

without his services in the Circumlocution Office,¹ than they can tolerate his fractious spirits. He poisons life at the well-head. It is better to be beggared out of hand by a scapegrace nephew, than daily hag-ridden by a peevish uncle.

And what, in God's name, is all this potter about? For what cause do they embitter their own and other people's lives? That a man should publish three or thirty articles a year, that he should finish or not finish his great allegorical picture, are questions of little interest to the world. The ranks of life are full; and although a thousand fall, there are always some to go into the breach. When they told Joan of Arc she should be at home minding women's work, she answered there were plenty to spin and wash. And so, even with your own rare gifts! When nature is "so careless of the single life,"² why should we coddle ourselves into the fancy that our own is of exceptional importance? Suppose Shakespeare had been knocked on the head some dark night in Sir Thomas Lucy's preserves, the world would have wagged on better or worse, the pitcher gone to the well, the scythe to the corn, and the student to his book; and no one been any the wiser of the loss. There are not many works extant, if you look the alternative all over, which are worth the price of a pound of tobacco to a man of limited means. This is a sobering reflection for the proudest of our earthly vanities. Even a tobacconist may, upon consideration, find no great cause for personal vainglory in the phrase; for although tobacco is an admirable sedative, the qualities necessary for retailing it are neither rare nor precious in themselves. Alas and alas! you may take it how you will, but the services of no single individual are indispensable. Atlas³ was just a gentleman with a protracted nightmare! And yet you see merchants who go and labor themselves into a great fortune and thence into the bankruptcy court; scribblers who keep scribbling at little articles until their temper is a cross to all who come about them, as though Pharaoh should set the Israelites

to make a pin instead of a pyramid; and fine young men who work themselves into a decline, and are driven off in a hearse with white plumes upon it. Would you not suppose these persons had been whispered, by the Master of the Ceremonies, the promise of some momentous destiny? and that this lukewarm bullet on which they play their farces was the bull's-eye and center-point of all the universe? And yet it is not so. The ends for which they gave away their priceless youth, for all they know, may be chimerical or hurtful; the glory and riches they expect may never come, or may find them indifferent; and they and the world they inhabit are so inconsiderable that the mind freezes at the thought.

A GOSSIP ON ROMANCE⁴

IN ANYTHING fit to be called by the name of reading, the process itself should be absorbing and voluptuous; we should gloat over a book, be rapt clean out of ourselves, and rise from the perusal, our mind filled with the busiest, kaleidoscopic dance of images, incapable of sleep or of continuous thought. The words, if the book be eloquent, should run thenceforward in our ears like the noise of breakers, and the story, if it be a story, repeat itself in a thousand colored pictures to the eye. It was for this last pleasure that we read so closely, and loved our books so dearly, in the bright, troubled period of boyhood. Eloquence and thought, character and conversation, were but obstacles to brush aside as we dug blithely after a certain sort of incident, like a pig for truffles. For my part, I liked a story to begin with an old wayside inn where, "towards the close of the year 17—," several gentlemen in three-cocked hats were playing bowls. A friend of mine preferred the Malabar coast in a storm, with a ship beating to windward, and a scowling fellow of herculean proportions striding along the beach; he, to be sure, was a pirate. This was further afield than my home-keeping fancy loved to travel, and designed altogether for a larger canvas than the tales that I affected. Give me a highwayman and I was full to the brim; a Jacobite would

¹See Dickens's *Little Dorrit*.

²Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, lv, 8.

³Who supported the world on his head.

⁴Published in 1882; reprinted in the volume entitled *Memories and Portraits*.

do, but the highwayman was my favorite dish. I can still hear that merry clatter of the hoofs along the moonlit lane; night and the coming of the day are still related in my mind with the doings of John Rann or Jerry Abershaw;¹ and the words "postchaise," the "great North road," "ostler," and "nag" still sound in my ears like poetry. One and all, at least, and each with his particular fancy, we read story-books in childhood, not for eloquence or character or thought, but for some quality of the brute incident. That quality was not mere bloodshed or wonder. Although each of these was welcome in its place, the charm for the sake of which we read depended on something different from either. My elders used to read novels aloud; and I can still remember four different passages which I heard, before I was ten, with the same keen and lasting pleasure. One I discovered long afterwards to be the admirable opening of *What Will He Do With It*;² it was no wonder I was pleased with that. The other three still remain unidentified. One is a little vague; it was about a dark, tall house at night, and people groping on the stairs by the light that escaped from the open door of a sick-room. In another, a lover left a ball, and went walking in a cool, dewy park, whence he could watch the lighted windows and the figures of the dancers as they moved. This was the most sentimental impression I think I had yet received, for a child is somewhat deaf to the sentimental. In the last, a poet, who had been tragically wrangling with his wife, walked forth on the seabeach on a tempestuous night and witnessed the horrors of a wreck.³ Different as they are, all these early favorites have a common note—they have all a touch of the romantic.

Drama is the poetry of conduct, romance the poetry of circumstance. The pleasure that we take in life is of two sorts—the active and the passive. Now we are conscious of a great command over our destiny; anon we are lifted up by circumstance, as by a breaking wave, and dashed we know not how into the future. Now we are pleased by our conduct, anon merely pleased by

our surroundings. It would be hard to say which of these modes of satisfaction is the more effective, but the latter is surely the more constant. Conduct is three parts of life, they say; but I think they put it high. There is a vast deal in life and letters both which is not immoral, but simply a-moral, which either does not regard the human will at all, or deals with it in obvious and healthy relations; where the interest turns, not upon what a man shall choose to do, but on how he manages to do it; not on the passionate slips and hesitations of the conscience, but on the problems of the body and of the practical intelligence, in clean, open-air adventure, the shock of arms or the diplomacy of life. With such material as this it is impossible to build a play, for the serious theater exists solely on moral grounds, and is a standing proof of the dissemination of the human conscience. But it is possible to build, upon this ground, the most joyous of verses, and the most lively, beautiful, and buoyant tales.

One thing in life calls for another; there is a fitness in events and places. The sight of a pleasant arbor puts it in our mind to sit there. One place suggests work, another idleness, a third early rising and long rambles in the dew. The effect of night, of any flowing water, of lighted cities, of the peep of day, of ships, of the open ocean, calls up in the mind an army of anonymous desires and pleasures. Something, we feel, should happen; we know not what, yet we proceed in quest of it. And many of the happiest hours of life fleet by us in this vain attendance on the genius of the place and moment. It is thus that tracts of young fir, and low rocks that reach into deep soundings, particularly torture and delight me. Something must have happened in such places, and perhaps ages back, to members of my race; and when I was a child I tried in vain to invent appropriate games for them, as I still try, just as vainly, to fit them with the proper story. Some places speak distinctly. Certain dank gardens cry aloud for a murder; certain old houses demand to be haunted; certain coasts are set apart for shipwreck. Other spots again seem to abide their destiny, suggestive and impenetrable, "miching mallecho."⁴ The inn at Burford

¹Highway robbers.

²By Bulwer-Lytton, published in 1858.

³Since traced by many obliging correspondents to the gallery of Charles Kingsley (Stevenson's note).

⁴Sneaking mischief (*Hamlet*, III, ii, 147).

Bridge, with its arbors and green garden and silent, eddying river—though it is known already as the place where Keats wrote some of his *Endymion* and Nelson parted from his Emma¹—still seems to wait the coming of the appropriate legend. Within these ivied walls, behind these old green shutters, some further business smolders, waiting for its hour. The old Hawes Inn at the Queen's Ferry makes a similar call upon my fancy. There it stands, apart from the town, beside the pier, in a climate of its own, half inland, half marine—in front, the ferry bubbling with the tide and the guardship swinging to her anchor; behind, the old garden with the trees. Americans seek it already for the sake of Lovel and Oldbuck, who dined there at the beginning of the *Antiquary*. But you need not tell me—that is not all; there is some story, unrecorded or not yet complete, which must express the meaning of that inn more fully. So it is with names and faces; so it is with incidents that are idle and inconclusive in themselves, and yet seem like the beginning of some quaint romance, which the all-careless author leaves untold. How many of these romances have we not seen determine at their birth; how many people have met us with a look of meaning in their eye, and sunk at once into trivial acquaintances; to how many places have we not drawn near, with express intimations—"here my destiny awaits me"—and we have but dined there and passed on! I have lived both at the Hawes and Burford in a perpetual flutter, on the heels, as it seemed, of some adventure that should justify the place; but though the feeling had me to bed at night and called me again at morning in one unbroken round of pleasure and suspense, nothing befell me in either worth remark. The man or the hour had not yet come; but some day, I think, a boat shall put off from the Queen's Ferry, fraught with a dear cargo, and some frosty night a horseman, on a tragic errand, rattle with his whip upon the green shutters of the inn at Burford.²

Now, this is one of the natural appetites

¹Lady Hamilton (1761-1815), Lord Nelson's mistress.

²Since the above was written I have tried to launch the boat with my own hands in *Kidnapped*. Some day, perhaps, I may try a rattle at the shutters (Stevenson's note).

with which any lively literature has to count. The desire for knowledge, I had almost added the desire for meat, is not more deeply seated than this demand for fit and striking incident. The dullest of clowns tells, or tries to tell, himself a story, as the feeblest of children uses inventions in his play; and even as the imaginative grown person, joining in the game, at once enriches it with many delightful circumstances, the great creative writer shows us the realization and the apotheosis of the day-dreams of common men. His stories may be nourished with the realities of life, but their true mark is to satisfy the nameless longings of the reader, and to obey the ideal laws of the day-dream. The right kind of thing should fall out in the right kind of place; the right kind of thing should follow; and not only the characters talk aptly and think naturally, but all the circumstances in a tale answer one to another like notes in music. The threads of a story come from time to time together and make a picture in the web; the characters fall from time to time into some attitude to each other or to nature, which stamps the story home like an illustration. Crusoe recoiling from the footprint, Achilles shouting over against the Trojans, Ulysses bending the great bow, Christian running with his fingers in his ears,³ these are each culminating moments in the legend, and each has been printed on the mind's eye for ever. Other things we may forget; we may forget the words, although they are beautiful; we may forget the author's comment, although perhaps it was ingenious and true; but these epoch-making scenes, which put the last mark of truth upon a story and fill up, at one blow, our capacity for sympathetic pleasure, we so adopt into the very bosom of our mind that neither time nor tide can efface or weaken the impression. This, then, is the plastic part of literature: to embody character, thought, or emotion in some act or attitude that shall be remarkably striking to the mind's eye. This is the highest and hardest thing to do in words; the thing which, once accomplished, equally delights the schoolboy and the sage, and makes, in its own right, the quality of epics. Compared with this, all other purposes in

³In *Robinson Crusoe*, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Pilgrim's Progress* respectively.

literature, except the purely lyrical or the purely philosophic, are bastard in nature, facile of execution, and feeble in result. It is one thing to write about the inn at Burford, or to describe scenery with the word-painters; it is quite another to seize on the heart of the suggestion and make a country famous with a legend. It is one thing to remark and to dissect, with the most cutting logic, the complications of life, and of the human spirit; it is quite another to give them body and blood in the story of Ajax¹ or of Hamlet. The first is literature, but the second is something besides, for it is likewise art.

English people of the present day are apt, I know not why, to look somewhat down on incident, and reserve their admiration for the clink of teaspoons and the accents of the curate. It is thought clever to write a novel with no story at all, or at least with a very dull one. Reduced even to the lowest terms, a certain interest can be communicated by the art of narrative; a sense of human kinship stirred; and a kind of monotonous fitness, comparable to the words and air of *Sandy's Mull*, preserved among the infinitesimal occurrences recorded. Some people work, in this manner, with even a strong touch. Mr. Trollope's inimitable clergymen naturally arise to the mind in this connection. But even Mr. Trollope does not confine himself to chronicling small beer. Mr. Crawley's collision with the Bishop's wife, Mr. Melnetto dallying in the deserted banquet-room,² are typical incidents, epically conceived, fitly embodying a crisis. Or again look at Thackeray. If Rawdon Crawley's blow were not delivered, *Vanity Fair* would cease to be a work of art. That scene is the chief ganglion of the tale; and the discharge of energy from Rawdon's fist is the reward and consolation of the reader. The end of *Esmond* is a yet wider excursion from the author's customary fields; the scene at Castlewood is pure Dumas; the great and wily English borrower has here borrowed from the great, unblushing French thief; as usual, he has borrowed admirably well, and the breaking of the sword rounds off the best of all his books

with a manly, martial note. But perhaps nothing can more strongly illustrate the necessity for marking incident than to compare the living fame of *Robinson Crusoe* with the discredit of *Clarissa Harlowe*.³ *Clarissa* is a book of a far more startling import, worked out, on a great canvas, with inimitable courage and unflagging art. It contains wit, character, passion, plot, conversations full of spirit and insight, letters sparkling with unstrained humanity; and if the death of the heroine be somewhat frigid and artificial, the last days of the hero strike the only note of what we now call Byronism, between the Elizabethans and Byron himself. And yet a little story of a shipwrecked sailor, with not a tenth part of the style nor a thousandth part of the wisdom, exploring none of the arcana of humanity and deprived of the perennial interest of love, goes on from edition to edition, ever young, while *Clarissa* lies upon the shelves unread. A friend of mine, a Welsh blacksmith, was twenty-five years old and could neither read nor write, when he heard a chapter of *Robinson* read aloud in a farm kitchen. Up to that moment he had sat content, huddled in his ignorance, but he left that farm another man. There were day-dreams, it appeared, divine day-dreams, written and printed and bound, and to be bought for money and enjoyed at pleasure. Down he sat that day, painfully learned to read Welsh, and returned to borrow the book. It had been lost, nor could he find another copy but one that was in English. Down he sat once more, learned English, and at length, and with entire delight, read *Robinson*. It was like the story of a love-chase. If he had heard a letter from *Clarissa*, would he have been fired with the same chivalrous ardor? I wonder. Yet *Clarissa* has every quality that can be shown in prose, one alone excepted—pictorial or picture-making romance. While *Robinson* depends, for the most part and with the overwhelming majority of its readers, on the charm of circumstance.

In the highest achievements of the art of words, the dramatic and the pictorial, the moral and romantic interest, rise and fall together by a common and organic law. Situation is animated with passion, passion

¹A tragedy of the same name by Sophocles.

²In *The Last Chronicle of Barset* and in *The Way We Live Now*, respectively.

³By Samuel Richardson, published in 1747-1748.

clothed upon with situation. Neither exists for itself, but each inheres indissolubly with the other. This is high art; and not only the highest art possible in words, but the highest art of all, since it combines the greatest mass and diversity of the elements of truth and pleasure. Such are epics, and the few prose tales that have the epic weight. But as from a school of works, aping the creative, incident and romance are ruthlessly discarded, so may character and drama be omitted or subordinated to romance. There is one book, for example, more generally loved than Shakespeare, that captivates in childhood, and still delights in age—I mean the *Arabian Nights*—where you shall look in vain for moral or for intellectual interest. No human face or voice greets us among that wooden crowd of kings and genies, sorcerers and beggarmen. Adventure, on the most naked terms, furnishes forth the entertainment and is found enough. Dumas approaches perhaps nearest of any modern to these Arabian authors in the purely material charm of some of his romances. The early part of *Monte Cristo*, down to the finding of the treasure, is a piece of perfect story-telling; the man never breathed who shared these moving incidents without a tremor; and yet Faria is a thing of packthread and Dantès little more than a name. The sequel is one long-drawn error, gloomy, bloody, unnatural, and dull; but as for these early chapters, I do not believe there is another volume extant where you can breathe the same unmingled atmosphere of romance. It is very thin and light, to be sure, as on a high mountain; but it is brisk and clear and sunny in proportion. I saw the other day, with envy, an old, and a very clever lady setting forth on a second or third voyage into *Monte Cristo*. Here are stories which powerfully affect the reader, which can be perused at any age, and where the characters are no more than puppets. The bony fist of the showman visibly propels them; their springs are an open secret; their faces are of wood, their bellies filled with bran; and yet we thrillingly partake of their adventures. And the point may be illustrated still further. The last interview between Lucy and Richard Feverel¹ is pure drama;

more than that, it is the strongest scene, since Shakespeare, in the English tongue. Their first meeting by the river, on the other hand, is pure romance; it has nothing to do with character; it might happen to any other boy and maiden, and be none the less delightful for the change. And yet I think he would be a bold man who should choose between these passages. Thus, in the same book, we may have two scenes, each capital in its order: in the one, human passion, deep calling unto deep, shall utter its genuine voice; in the second, according circumstances, like instruments in tune, shall build up a trivial but desirable incident, such as we love to prefigure for ourselves; and in the end, in spite of the critics, we may hesitate to give the preference to either. The one may ask more genius—I do not say it does; but at least the other dwells as clearly in the memory. *

True romantic art, again, makes a romance of all things. It reaches into the highest abstraction of the ideal; it does not refuse the most pedestrian realism. *Robinson Crusoe* is as realistic as it is romantic: both qualities are pushed to an extreme, and neither suffers. Nor does romance depend upon the material importance of the incidents. To deal with strong and deadly elements, banditti, pirates, war and murder, is to conjure with great names, and, in the event of failure, to double the disgrace. The arrival of Haydn and Consuelo at the Canon's villa² is a very trifling incident; yet we may read a dozen boisterous stories from beginning to end, and not receive so fresh and stirring an impression of adventure. It was the scene of *Crusoe* at the wreck, if I remember rightly, that so bewitched my blacksmith. Nor is the fact surprising. Every single article the castaway recovers from the hulk is "a joy for ever"³ to the man who reads of them. They are the things that should be found, and the bare enumeration stirs the blood. I found a glimmer of the same interest the other day in a new book, *The Sailor's Sweetheart*, by Mr. Clark Russell. The whole business of the brig *Morning Star* is very rightly felt and spiritedly written; but the clothes, the

¹In George Sand's *Consuelo*.

²Keats, *Endymion*, I, 1.

¹In George Meredith's *Ordeal of Richard Feverel*.

books and the money satisfy the reader's mind like things to eat. We are dealing here with the old cut-and-dry, legitimate interest of treasure trove. But even treasure trove can be made dull. There are few people who have not groaned under the plethora of goods that fell to the lot of the *Swiss Family Robinson*, that dreary family. They found article after article, creature after creature, from milk kine to pieces of ordnance, a whole consignment; but no informing taste had presided over the selection, there was no smack or relish in the invoice; and these riches left the fancy cold. The box of goods in Verne's *Mysterious Island* is another case in point; there was no gusto and no glamour about that; it might have come from a shop. But the two hundred and seventy-eight Australian sovereigns on board the *Morning Star* fell upon me like a surprise that I had expected; whole vistas of secondary stories, besides the one in hand, radiated forth from that discovery, as they radiate from a striking particular in life; and I was made for the moment as happy as a reader has the right to be.

To come at all at the nature of this quality of romance, we must bear in mind the peculiarity of our attitude to any art. No art produces illusion; in the theater we never forget that we are in the theater; and while we read a story, we sit wavering between two minds, now merely clapping our hands at the merit of the performance, now condescending to take an active part in fancy with the characters. This last is the triumph of romantic story-telling: when the reader consciously plays at being the hero, the scene is a good scene. Now, in character-studies the pleasure that we take is critical; we watch, we approve, we smile at incongruities, we are moved to sudden heats of sympathy with courage, suffering, or virtue. But the characters are still themselves, they are not us; the more clearly they are depicted, the more widely do they stand away from us, the more imperiously do they thrust us back into our place as a spectator. I cannot identify myself with Rawdon Crawley or with Eugène de Rastignac,¹ for I have scarce a hope or fear in

common with them. It is not character but incident that woos us out of our reserve. Something happens as we desire to have it happen to ourselves; some situation, that we have long dallied with in fancy, is realized in the story with enticing and appropriate details. Then we forget the characters; then we push the hero aside; then we plunge into the tale in our own person and bathe in fresh experience; and then, and then only, do we say we have been reading a romance. It is not only pleasurable things that we imagine in our day-dreams; there are lights in which we are willing to contemplate even the idea of our own death, ways in which it seems as if it would amuse us to be cheated, wounded, or calumniated. It is thus possible to construct a story, even of tragic import, in which every incident, detail, and trick of circumstance shall be welcome to the reader's thoughts. Fiction is to the grown man what play is to the child; it is there that he changes the atmosphere and tenor of his life; and when the game so chimes with his fancy that he can join in it with all his heart, when it pleases him with every turn, when he loves to recall it and dwells upon its recollection with entire delight, fiction is called romance.

Walter Scott is out and away the king of the romantics. *The Lady of the Lake* has no indisputable claim to be a poem beyond the inherent fitness and desirability of the tale. It is just such a story as a man would make up for himself, walking, in the best health and temper, through just such scenes as it is laid in. Hence it is that a charm dwells undefinable among these slovenly verses, as the unseen cuckoo fills the mountains with his note; hence, even after we have flung the book aside, the scenery and adventures remain present to the mind, a new and green possession, not unworthy of that beautiful name, *The Lady of the Lake*, or that direct, romantic opening,—one of the most spirited and poetical in literature,—“The stag at eve had drunk his fill.” The same strength and the same weaknesses adorn and disfigure the novels. In that ill-written, ragged book, *The Pirate*, the figure of Cleveland—cast up by the sea on the resounding foreland of Dunrossness—moving, with the blood on his hands and the Spanish words on his tongue, among

¹In Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* and in Balzac's *Père Goriot* and other stories, respectively.

the simple islanders—singing a serenade under the window of his Shetland mistress—is conceived in the very highest manner of romantic invention. The words of his song, "Through groves of palm," sung in such a scene and by such a lover, clench, as in a nutshell, the emphatic contrast upon which the tale is built. In *Guy Mannering*, again, every incident is delightful to the imagination; and the scene when Harry Bertram lands at Ellangowan is a model instance of romantic method.

"I remember the tune well," he says, 'though I cannot guess what should at present so strongly recall it to my memory.' He took his flageolet from his pocket and played a simple melody. Apparently the tune awoke the corresponding associations of a damsel. . . . She immediately took up the song—

"Are these the links of Forth, she said;
Or are they the crooks of Dee,
Or the bonny woods of Warroch Head
That I so fain would see?"

"By heaven!" said Bertram, 'it is the very ballad.'"

On this quotation two remarks fall to be made. First, as an instance of modern feeling for romance, this famous touch of the flageolet and the old song is selected by Miss Braddon¹ for omission. Miss Braddon's idea of a story, like Mrs. Todgers's idea of a wooden leg, were something strange to have expounded. As a matter of personal experience, Meg's appearance to old Mr. Bertram on the road, the ruins of Derncleugh, the scene of the flageolet, and the Dominie's recognition of Harry, are the four strong notes that continue to ring in the mind after the book is laid aside. The second point is still more curious. The reader will observe a mark of excision in the passage as quoted by me. Well, here is how it runs in the original: "A damsel who, close behind a fine spring about half-way down the descent, and which had once supplied the castle with water, was engaged in bleaching linen." A man who gave in such copy would be discharged from the staff of a daily paper.

¹Mary Elizabeth Braddon (Mrs. John Maxwell, 1837-1915), a novelist. Mrs. Todgers appears in Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

Scott has forgotten to prepare the reader for the presence of the "damsel"; he has forgotten to mention the spring and its relation to the ruin; and now, face to face with his omission, instead of trying back and starting fair, crams all this matter, tail foremost, into a single shambling sentence. It is not merely bad English, or bad style; it is abominably bad narrative besides.

Certainly the contrast is remarkable; and it is one that throws a strong light upon the subject of this paper. For here we have a man of the finest creative instinct touching with perfect certainty and charm the romantic junctures of his story; and we find him utterly careless, almost, it would seem, incapable, in the technical matter of style, and not only frequently weak, but frequently wrong in points of drama. In character parts, indeed, and particularly in the Scotch, he was delicate, strong, and truthful; but the trite, obliterated features of too many of his heroes have already wearied two generations of readers. At times his characters will speak with something far beyond propriety with a true heroic note; but on the next page they will be wading wearily forward with an ungrammatical and undramatic rigmarole of words. The man who could conceive and write the character of Elspeth of the Craighburnfoot,² as Scott has conceived and written it, had not only splendid romantic, but splendid tragic gifts. How comes it, then, that he could so often fob us off with languid, inarticulate twaddle?

It seems to me that the explanation is to be found in the very quality of his surprising merits. As his books are play to the reader, so were they play to him. He conjured up the romantic with delight, but he had hardly patience to describe it. He was a great day-dreamer, a seer of fit and beautiful and humorous visions, but hardly a great artist; hardly, in the manful sense, an artist at all. He pleased himself, and so he pleases us. Of the pleasures of his art he tasted fully; but of its toils and vigils and distresses never man knew less. A great romantic—an idle child.

²In the *Antiquary*.

FATHER DAMIEN¹

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE REVEREND
DR. HYDE OF HONOLULU

Sydney, February 25, 1890.

SIR,—It may probably occur to you that we have met, and visited, and conversed; on my side, with interest. You may remember that you have done me several courtesies, for which I was prepared to be grateful. But there are duties which come before gratitude, and offenses which justly divide friends, far more acquaintances. Your letter to the Reverend H. B. Gage is a document, which, in my sight, if you had filled me with bread when I was starving, if you had sat up to nurse my father when he lay a-dying, would yet absolve me from the bonds of gratitude. You know enough, doubtless, of the process of canonization to be aware that, a hundred years after the death of Damien, there will appear a man charged with the painful office of the *devil's advocate*. After that noble brother of mine, and of all frail clay, shall have lain a century at rest, one shall accuse, one defend him. The circumstance is unusual that the devil's advocate should be a volunteer, should be a member of a sect immediately rival, and should make haste to take upon himself his ugly office ere the bones are cold; unusual, and of a taste which I shall leave my readers free to qualify; unusual, and to me inspiring. If I have at all learned the trade of using words to convey truth and to arouse emotion, you have at last furnished

me with a subject. For it is in the interest of all mankind and the cause of public decency in every quarter of the world, not only that Damien should be righted, but that you and your letter should be displayed at length, in their true colors, to the public eye.

To do this properly, I must begin by quoting you at large: I shall then proceed to criticize your utterance from several points of view, divine and human, in the course of which I shall attempt to draw again and with more specification the character of the dead saint whom it has pleased you to vilify: so much being done, I shall say farewell to you for ever.

Honolulu, August 2, 1889.

REV. H. B. GAGE.

Dear Brother,—In answer to your inquiries about Father Damien, I can only reply that we who knew the man are surprised at the extravagant newspaper laudations, as if he was a most saintly philanthropist. The simple truth is, he was a coarse, dirty man, headstrong and bigoted. He was not sent to Molokai, but went there without orders; did not stay at the leper settlement (before he became one himself), but circulated freely over the whole island (less than half the island is devoted to the lepers), and he came often to Honolulu. He had no hand in the reforms and improvements inaugurated, which were the work of our Board of Health, as occasion required and means were provided. He was not a pure man in his relations with women, and the leprosy of which he died should be attributed to his vices and carelessness. Others have done much for the lepers, our own ministers, the government physicians, and so forth, but never with the Catholic idea of meriting eternal life.—Yours, *etc.*,

C. M. HYDE.²

¹Printed at Sydney, Australia, in 1890, at Stevenson's expense; reprinted in the volume entitled *Lay Morals and Other Papers*. In 1889 Stevenson was at Honolulu and visited the leper settlement on Molokai (one of the Hawaiian Islands), there learning at first hand what he tells about Joseph Damien de Veuster (1840–1889), the Belgian priest who devoted his life to the lepers. Later Stevenson learned of Dr. Hyde's letter through a statement in a newspaper to the effect that the publication of the letter had caused the abandonment of a project to erect a monument to Damien's memory. "I'll not believe it," he said, "unless I see it with my own eyes; for it is too damnable for belief." When, however, he presently reached Sydney, Stevenson did see Dr. Hyde's published letter, and the same day wrote his reply. "I knew," he said, "I was writing a libel; I thought he [Hyde] would bring an action; I made sure I should be ruined; I asked leave of my gallant family, and the sense that I was signing away all I possessed kept me up to high-water mark, and made me feel every insult heroic."

To deal fitly with a letter so extraordinary, I must draw at the outset on my private knowledge of the signatory and his sect. It may offend others; scarcely you, who have been so busy to collect, so bold to publish, gossip on your rivals. And this is perhaps the moment when I may best explain to you the character of what you are to read: I conceive you as a man quite beyond and below the reticences of civility: with what measure you mete, with that shall it be measured you again; with you, at last,

²From the Sydney *Presbyterian*, October 26, 1889 (Stevenson's note).

I rejoice to feel the button off the foil and to plunge home. And if in aught that I shall say I should offend others, your colleagues, whom I respect and remember with affection, I can but offer them my regret; I am not free, I am inspired by the consideration of interests far more large; and such pain as can be inflicted by anything from me must be indeed trifling when compared with the pain with which they read your letter. It is not the hangman, but the criminal, that brings dishonor on the house.

You belong, sir, to a sect—I believe my sect, and that in which my ancestors labored—which has enjoyed, and partly failed to utilize, an exceptional advantage in the islands of Hawaii. The first missionaries came; they found the land already self-purged of its old and bloody faith; they were embraced, almost on their arrival, with enthusiasm; what troubles they supported came far more from whites than from Hawaiians; and to these last they stood (in a rough figure) in the shoes of God. This is not the place to enter into the degree or causes of their failure, such as it is. One element alone is pertinent, and must here be plainly dealt with. In the course of their evangelical calling, they—or too many of them—grew rich. It may be news to you that the houses of missionaries are a cause of mocking on the streets of Honolulu. It will at least be news to you, that when I returned your civil visit, the driver of my cab commented on the size, the taste, and the comfort of your home. It would have been news certainly to myself, had any one told me that afternoon that I should live to drag such matter into print. But you see, sir, how you degrade better men to your own level; and it is needful that those who are to judge betwixt you and me, betwixt Damien and the devil's advocate, should understand your letter to have been penned in a house which could raise, and that very justly, the envy and the comments of the passers-by. I think (to employ a phrase of yours which I admire) it "should be attributed" to you that you have never visited the scene of Damien's life and death. If you had, and had recalled it, and looked about your pleasant rooms, even your pen perhaps would have been stayed,

Your sect (and remember, as far as any sect avows me, it is mine) has not done ill in a worldly sense in the Hawaiian Kingdom. When calamity befell their innocent parishioners, when leprosy descended and took root in the Eight Islands, a *quid pro quo*¹ was to be looked for. To that prosperous mission, and to you, as one of its adornments, God had sent at last an opportunity. I know I am touching here upon a nerve acutely sensitive. I know that others of your colleagues look back on the inertia of your Church, and the intrusive and decisive heroism of Damien, with something almost to be called remorse. I am sure it is so with yourself; I am persuaded your letter was inspired by a certain envy, not essentially ignoble, and the one human trait to be espied in that performance. You were thinking of the lost chance, the past day; of that which should have been conceived and was not; of the service due and not rendered. *Time was*, said the voice in your ear, in your pleasant room, as you sat raging and writing; and if the words written were base beyond parallel, the rage, I am happy to repeat—it is the only compliment I shall pay you—the rage was almost virtuous. But, sir, when we have failed, and another has succeeded; when we have stood by, and another has stepped in; when we sit and grow bulky in our charming mansions, and a plain, uncouth peasant steps into the battle, under the eyes of God, and succors the afflicted, and consoles the dying, and is himself afflicted in his turn, and dies upon the field of honor—the battle cannot be retrieved as your unhappy irritation has suggested. It is a lost battle, and lost for ever. One thing remained to you in your defeat—some rags of common honor; and these you have made haste to cast away.

Common honor; not the honor of having done anything right, but the honor of not having done aught conspicuously foul; the honor of the inert: that was what remained to you. We are not all expected to be Damiens; a man may conceive his duty more narrowly, he may love his comforts better; and none will cast a stone at him for that. But will a gentleman of your reverend profession allow me an

¹A fair return.

example from the fields of gallantry? When two gentlemen compete for the favor of a lady, and the one succeeds and the other is rejected, and (as will sometimes happen) matter damaging to the successful rival's credit reaches the ear of the defeated, it is held by plain men of no pretensions that his mouth is, in the circumstance, almost necessarily closed. Your Church and Damien's were in Hawaii upon a rivalry to do well: to help, to edify, to set divine examples. You having (in one huge instance) failed, and Damien succeeded, I marvel it should not have occurred to you that you were doomed to silence; that when you had been outstripped in that high rivalry, and sat inglorious in the midst of your well-being, in your pleasant room—and Damien, crowned with glories and horrors, toiled and rotted in that pigstye of his under the cliffs of Kalawao—you, the elect who would not, were the last man on earth to collect and propagate gossip on the volunteer who would and did.

I think I see you—for I try to see you in the flesh as I write these sentences—I think I see you leap at the word pigstye, a hyperbolical expression at the best. "He had no hand in the reforms," he was "a coarse, dirty man"; these were your own words; and you may think it possible that I am come to support you with fresh evidence. In a sense, it is even so. Damien has been too much depicted with a conventional halo and conventional features; so drawn by men who perhaps had not the eye to remark or the pen to express the individual; or who perhaps were only blinded and silenced by generous admiration, such as I partly envy for myself—such as you, if your soul were enlightened, would envy on your bended knees. It is the least defect of such a method of portraiture that it makes the path easy for the devil's advocate, and leaves for the misuse of the slanderer a considerable field of truth. For the truth that is suppressed by friends is the readiest weapon of the enemy. The world, in your despite, may perhaps owe you something, if your letter be the means of substituting once for all a credible likeness for a wax abstraction. For, if that world at all remember you, on the day when Damien of Molokai shall be named Saint, it will be in

virtue of one work: your letter to the Reverend H. B. Gage.

You may ask on what authority I speak. It was my inclement destiny to become acquainted, not with Damien, but with Dr. Hyde. When I visited the lazaretto Damien was already in his resting grave. But such information as I have, I gathered on the spot in conversation with those who knew him well and long: some indeed who revered his memory; but others who had sparred and wrangled with him, who beheld him with no halo, who perhaps regarded him with small respect, and through whose unprepared and scarcely partial communications the plain, human features of the man shone on me convincingly. These gave me what knowledge I possess; and I learned it in that scene where it could be most completely and sensitively understood—Kalawao, which you have never visited, about which you have never so much as endeavored to inform yourself: for, brief as your letter is, you have found the means to stumble into that confession. "*Less than one-half of the island*," you say, "is devoted to the lepers." Molokai—"Molokai ahina," the "gray," lofty, and most desolate island—along all its northern side plunges a front of precipice into a sea of unusual profundity. This range of cliff is, from east to west, the true end and frontier of the island. Only in one spot there projects into the ocean a certain triangular and rugged down, grassy, stony, windy, and rising in the midst into a hill with a dead crater: the whole bearing to the cliff that overhangs it somewhat the same relation as a bracket to a wall. With this hint you will now be able to pick out the leper station on a map; you will be able to judge how much of Molokai is thus cut off between the surf and precipice, whether less than a half, or less than a quarter, or a fifth, or a tenth—or say, a twentieth; and the next time you burst into print you will be in a position to share with us the issue of your calculations.

I imagine you to be one of those persons who talk with cheerfulness of that place which oxen and wainropes could not drag you to behold. You, who do not even know its situation on the map, probably denounce sensational descriptions, stretching your

limbs the while in your pleasant parlor on Beretania Street. When I was pulled ashore there one early morning, there sat with me in the boat two sisters, bidding farewell (in humble imitation of Damien) to the lights and joys of human life. One of these wept silently; I could not withhold myself from joining her. Had you been there, it is my belief that nature would have triumphed even in you; and as the boat drew but a little nearer, and you beheld the stairs crowded with abominable deformations of our common manhood, and saw yourself landing in the midst of such a population as only now and then surrounds us in the horror of a nightmare—what a haggard eye you would have rolled over your reluctant shoulder towards the house on Beretania Street! Had you gone on; had you found every fourth face a blot upon the landscape; had you visited the hospital and seen the butt-ends of human beings lying there almost unrecognizable, but still breathing, still thinking, still remembering; you would have understood that life in the lazaretto is an ordeal from which the nerves of a man's spirit shrink, even as his eye quails under the brightness of the sun; you would have felt it was (even to-day) a pitiful place to visit and a hell to dwell in. It is not the fear of possible infection. That seems a little thing when compared with the pain, the pity, and the disgust of the visitor's surroundings, and the atmosphere of affliction, disease, and physical disgrace in which he breathes. I do not think I am a man more than usually timid; but I never recall the days and nights I spent upon that island promontory (eight days and seven nights), without heartfelt thankfulness that I am somewhere else. I find in my diary that I speak of my stay as a "grinding experience": I have once jotted in the margin, "*Harrowing* is the word"; and when the *Mokolii* bore me at last towards the outer world, I kept repeating to myself, with a new conception of their pregnancy, those simple words of the song—

"'Tis the most distressful country that
ever yet was seen."

And observe: that which I saw and suffered from was a settlement purged, bettered,

beautified; the new village built, the hospital and the Bishop-Home excellently arranged; the sisters, the doctor, and the missionaries, all indefatigable in their noble tasks. It was a different place when Damien came there, and made his great renunciation, and slept that first night under a tree amidst his rotting brethren: alone with pestilence; and looking forward (with what courage, with what pitiful sinkings of dread, God only knows) to a lifetime of dressing sores and stumps.

You will say, perhaps, I am too sensitive, that sights as painful abound in cancer hospitals and are confronted daily by doctors and nurses. I have long learned to admire and envy the doctors and the nurses. But there is no cancer hospital so large and populous as Kalawao and Kalaulapa; and in such a matter every fresh case, like every inch of length in the pipe of an organ, deepens the note of the impression; for what daunts the onlooker is that monstrous sum of human suffering by which he stands surrounded. Lastly, no doctor or nurse is called upon to enter once for all the doors of that gehenna; they do not say farewell, they need not abandon hope, on its sad threshold; they but go for a time to their high calling, and can look forward as they go to relief, to recreation, and to rest. But Damien shut with his own hand the doors of his own sepulcher.

I shall now extract three passages from my diary at Kalawao:

A. Damien is dead and already somewhat ungratefully remembered in the field of his labors and sufferings. "He was a good man, but very officious," says one. Another tells me he had fallen (as other priests so easily do) into something of the ways and habits of thought of a Kanaka;¹ but he had the wit to recognize the fact, and the good sense to laugh at [over] it. A plain man it seems he was; I cannot find he was a popular.

B. After Ragsdale's death [Ragsdale was a famous Luna, or overseer, of the unruly settlement] there followed a brief term of office by Father Damien which served only to publish the weakness of that noble man. He was rough in his ways, and he had no control. Authority was relaxed; Damien's life was threatened, and he was soon eager to resign.

C. Of Damien I begin to have an idea. He

¹The name given to the aboriginal inhabitants of the Hawaiian Islands.

seems to have been a man of the peasant class, certainly of the peasant type: shrewd; ignorant and bigoted, yet with an open mind, and capable of receiving and digesting a reproof if it were bluntly administered; superbly generous in the least thing as well as in the greatest, and as ready to give his last shirt (although not without human grumbling) as he had been to sacrifice his life; essentially indiscreet and officious, which made him a troublesome colleague; domineering in all his ways, which made him incurably unpopular with the Kanakas, but yet destitute of real authority, so that his boys laughed at him and he must carry out his wishes by the means of bribes. He learned to have a mania for doctoring; and set up the Kanakas against the remedies of his regular rivals: perhaps (if anything matter at all in the treatment of such a disease) the worst thing that he did, and certainly the easiest. The best and worst of the man appear very plainly in his dealings with Mr. Chapman's money; he had originally laid it out [intended to lay it out] entirely for the benefit of Catholics, and even so not wisely, but after a long, plain talk, he admitted his error fully and revised the list. The sad state of the boys' home is in part the result of his lack of control; in part, of his own slovenly ways and false ideas of hygiene. Brother officials used to call it "Damien's Chinatown." "Well," they would say, "your Chinatown keeps growing." And he would laugh with perfect good-nature, and adhere to his errors with perfect obstinacy. So much I have gathered of truth about this plain, noble human brother and father of ours; his imperfections are the traits of his face, by which we know him for our fellow; his martyrdom and his example nothing can lessen or annul; and only a person here on the spot can properly appreciate their greatness.

I have set down these private passages, as you perceive, without correction; thanks to you, the public has them in their bluntness. They are almost a list of the man's faults, for it is rather these that I was seeking: with his virtues, with the heroic profile of his life, I and the world were already sufficiently acquainted. I was besides a little suspicious of Catholic testimony; in no ill sense, but merely because Damien's admirers and disciples were the least likely to be critical. I know you will be more suspicious still; and the facts set down above were one and all collected from the lips of Protestants who had opposed the father in his life. Yet I am strangely deceived, or they build up the image of a man, with all his weaknesses, essentially heroic, and alive with rugged honesty, generosity, and mirth.

Take it for what it is, rough private jottings of the worst sides of Damien's character, collected from the lips of those who had labored with and (in your own phrase) "knew the man";—though I question whether Damien would have said that he knew you. Take it, and observe with wonder how well you were served by your gossips, how ill by your intelligence and sympathy; in how many points of fact we are at one, and how widely our appreciations vary. There is something wrong here; either with you or me. It is possible, for instance, that you, who seem to have so many ears in Kalawao, had heard of the affair of Mr. Chapman's money, and were singly struck by Damien's intended wrongdoing. I was struck with that also, and set it fairly down; but I was struck much more by the fact that he had the honesty of mind to be convinced. I may here tell you that it was a long business; that one of his colleagues sat with him late into the night, multiplying arguments and accusations; that the father listened as usual with "perfect good-nature and perfect obstinacy"; but at the last when he was persuaded,— "Yes," said he, "I am very much obliged to you; you have done me a service; it would have been a theft." There are many (not Catholics merely) who require their heroes and saints to be infallible; to these the story will be painful; not to the true lovers, patrons, and servants of mankind.

And I take it, this is a type of our division; that you are one of those who have an eye for faults and failures; that you take a pleasure to find and publish them; and that, having found them, you make haste to forget the overruling virtues and the real success which had alone introduced them to your knowledge. It is a dangerous frame of mind. That you may understand how dangerous, and into what a situation it has already brought you, we will (if you please) go hand-in-hand through the different phrases of your letter, and candidly examine each from the point of view of its truth, its appositeness, and its charity.

Damien was *coarse*.

It is very possible. You make us sorry for the lepers who had only a coarse old peasant for their friend and father. But

you, who were so refined, why were you not there, to cheer them with the lights of culture? Or may I remind you that we have some reason to doubt if John the Baptist were genteel; and in the case of Peter, on whose career you doubtless dwell approvingly in the pulpit, no doubt at all he was a "coarse, headstrong" fisherman! Yet even in our Protestant Bibles Peter is called Saint.

Damien was *dirty*.

He was. Think of the poor lepers annoyed with this dirty comrade! But the clean Dr. Hyde was at his food in a fine house.

Damien was *headstrong*.

I believe you are right again; and I thank God for his strong head and heart.

Damien was *bigoted*.

I am not fond of bigots myself, because they are not fond of me. But what is meant by bigotry, that we should regard it as a blemish in a priest? Damien believed his own religion with the simplicity of a peasant or a child; as I would I could suppose that you do. For this, I wonder at him some way off; and had that been his only character, should have avoided him in life. But the point of interest in Damien, which has caused him to be so much talked about and made him at last the subject of your pen and mine, was that, in him, his bigotry, his intense and narrow faith, wrought potently for good, and strengthened him to be one of the world's heroes and exemplars.

Damien was not sent to Mōlokai, but went there without orders.

Is this a misreading? or do you really mean the words for blame? I have heard Christ, in the pulpits of our Church, held up for imitation on the ground that His sacrifice was voluntary. Does Dr. Hyde think otherwise?

Damien did not stay at the settlement, etc.

It is true he was allowed many indulgences. Am I to understand that you blame the father for profiting by these, or the officers for granting them? In either case,

it is a mighty Spartan standard to issue from the house on Beretania Street; and I am convinced you will find yourself with few supporters.

Damien *had no hand in the reforms, etc.*

I think even you will admit that I have already been frank in my description of the man I am defending; but before I take you up upon this head, I will be franker still, and tell you that perhaps nowhere in the world can a man taste a more pleasurable sense of contrast than when he passes from Damien's "Chinatown" at Kalawao to the beautiful Bishop-Home at Kalaupapa. At this point, in my desire to make all fair for you, I will break my rule and adduce Catholic testimony. Here is a passage from my diary about my visit to the Chinatown, from which you will see how it is (even now) regarded by its own officials: "We went round all the dormitories, refectories, etc.—dark and dingy enough, with a superficial cleanliness, which he" [Mr. Dutton, the lay brother] "did not seek to defend. 'It is almost decent,' said he; 'the sisters will make that all right when we get them here.'" And yet I gathered it was already better since Damien was dead, and far better than when he was there alone and had his own (not always excellent) way. I have now come far enough to meet you on a common ground of fact; and I tell you that, to a mind not prejudiced by jealousy, all the reforms of the lazaretto, and even those which he most vigorously opposed, are properly the work of Damien. They are the evidence of his success; they are what his heroism provoked from the reluctant and the careless. Many were before him in the field; Mr. Meyer, for instance, of whose faithful work we hear too little: there have been many since; and some had more worldly wisdom, though none had more devotion, than our saint. Before his day, even you will confess, they had effected little. It was his part, by one striking act of martyrdom, to direct all men's eyes on that distressful country. At a blow, and with the price of his life, he made the place illustrious and public. And that, if you will consider largely, was the one reform needful; pregnant of all that should succeed. It brought money; it brought (best individual addition

of them all) the sisters; it brought supervision, for public opinion and public interest landed with the man at Kalawao. If ever man brought reforms, and died to bring them, it was he. There is not a clean cup or towel in the Bishop-Home, but dirty Damien washed it.

Damien was not a pure man in his relations with women, etc.

How do you know that? Is this the nature of the conversation in that house on Beretania Street which the cabman envied, driving past?—racy details of the misconduct of the poor peasant priest, toiling under the cliffs of Molokai?

Many have visited the station before me; they seem not to have heard the rumor. When I was there I heard many shocking tales, for my informants were men speaking with the plainness of the laity; and I heard plenty of complaints of Damien. Why was this never mentioned? and how came it to you in the retirement of your clerical parlor?

But I must not even seem to deceive you. This scandal, when I read it in your letter, was not new to me. I had heard it once before; and I must tell you how. There came to Samoa a man from Honolulu; he, in a public-house on the beach, volunteered the statement that Damien had "contracted the disease from having connection with the female lepers"; and I find a joy in telling you how the report was welcomed in a public-house. A man sprang to his feet; I am not at liberty to give his name, but from what I heard I doubt if you would care to have him to dinner in Beretania Street. "You miserable little ——" (here is a word I dare not print, it would so shock your ears). "You miserable little ——," he cried, "if the story were a thousand times true, can't you see you are a million times a lower —— for daring to repeat it?" I wish it could be told of you that when the report reached you in your house, perhaps after family worship, you had found in your soul enough holy anger to receive it with the same expressions: ay, even with that one which I dare not print; it would not need to have been blotted away, like Uncle Toby's oath,¹

by the tears of the recording angel; it would have been counted to you for your brightest righteousness. But you have deliberately chosen the part of the man from Honolulu, and you have played it with improvements of your own. The man from Honolulu—miserable, leering creature—communicated the tale to a rude knot of beach-combing drinkers in a public-house, where (I will so far agree with your temperance opinions) man is not always at his noblest; and the man from Honolulu had himself been drinking—drinking, we may charitably fancy, to excess. It was to your "Dear Brother, the Reverend H. B. Gage," that you chose to communicate the sickening story; and the blue ribbon which adorns your portly bosom forbids me to allow you the extenuating plea that you were drunk when it was done. Your "dear brother"—a brother indeed—made haste to deliver up your letter (as a means of grace, perhaps) to the religious papers; where, after many months, I found and read and wondered at it; and whence I have now reproduced it for the wonder of others. And you and your dear brother have, by this cycle of operations, built up a contrast very edifying to examine in detail. The man whom you would not care to have to dinner, on the one side; on the other, the Reverend Dr. Hyde and the Reverend H. B. Gage: the Apia bar-room, the Honolulu manse.

But I fear you scarce appreciate how you appear to your fellow-men; and to bring it home to you, I will suppose your story to be true. I will suppose—and God forgive me for supposing it—that Damien faltered and stumbled in his narrow path of duty; I will suppose that, in the horror of his isolation, perhaps in the fever of incipient disease, he, who was doing so much more than he had sworn, failed in the letter of his priestly oath—he, who was so much a better man than either you or me, who did what we have never dreamed of daring—he too tasted of our common frailty. "O, Iago, the pity of it!"² The least tender should be moved to tears; the most incredulous to prayer. And all that you could do was to pen your letter to the Reverend H. B. Gage!

¹In Lawrence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*.

²*Othello*, IV, i, 207.

Is it growing at all clear to you what a picture you have drawn of your own heart? I will try yet once again to make it clearer. You had a father: suppose this tale were about him, and some informant brought it to you, proof in hand: I am not making too high an estimate of your emotional nature when I suppose you would regret the circumstance? that you would feel the

tale of frailty the more keenly since it shamed the author of your days? and that the last thing you would do would be to publish it in the religious press? Well, the man who tried to do what Damien did, is my father, and the father of the man in the Apia bar, and the father of all who love goodness; and he was your father too, if God had given you grace to see it.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE (1837-1909)

Swinburne was born in London on 5 April, 1837, the eldest child of Admiral Charles Henry Swinburne and the Lady Jane Henrietta, daughter of the third Earl of Ashburnham. It is said that Swinburne's features and something of his mental character were inherited from his mother, who was a woman of unusual accomplishment and widely read in foreign literature. Swinburne's paternal grandfather, Sir John Edward Swinburne, sixth baronet of Capheaton, Northumberland, who had been born and brought up in France, and who in habits, dress, and modes of thought resembled a French nobleman of the *ancien régime*, exercised a strong influence over his grandson's youth. The boy was brought up in the Isle of Wight, and from his earliest years was trained by his grandfather and mother in French and Italian. In 1849 he was sent to Eton, where he proceeded to read enormously, devouring everything he could lay his hands on, particularly in the fields of lyric poetry and the Elizabethan drama. By the time he was fourteen many of his life-long partialities and prejudices were fully formed; at that time he was immersed in Shelley, Keats, Landor, the *Orlando Furioso*, and the tragedies of Corneille, and already he was indifferent to Horace, disliked Racine, and hated Euripides. In 1853 Swinburne left Eton under something of a cloud, because of his rebellious attitude towards one or more of his teachers. There was then some talk in his family of preparing him for the army, but the project was abandoned because of his shortness and slightness, to his own life-long regret. In January, 1856, he entered Balliol College, Oxford. After his first year at Oxford his high-church proclivities melted away, and he became, what he remained, a nihilist in religion and a republican. He kept his terms regularly at Oxford until 1858, after which he was there less regularly, and he finally left the University without a degree in the fall of 1859. He was a brilliant though self-willed student, and his attainments in Greek were remarkable, but Benjamin Jowett, who long remained his warm friend, advised his leaving Oxford because of irregular ways of life into which he was drifting.

Late in 1860 Swinburne's first book was published, *The Queen Mother and Rosamond*, containing two plays. It passed at the time entirely unnoticed both by reviewers and by the public, and it is said that not a single copy was sold until some years afterwards. In the years immediately following he began to indulge in those "excitements of London life" which were long to arouse the fears of his friends, when he could not be kept away from them, and which played havoc with his health. Early in 1864 he went abroad for the longest journey of his life, traveling through France to Italy, where he saw his idol, Landor, then in his ninetieth year. In April, 1865, Swinburne's second book, *Atalanta in Calydon*, was published. The magnificent verse of this play did not go unappreciated, and the book became, indeed, the literary sensation of the year. At the end of 1865 a fourth play was published, *Chastelard*, which also was successful, though it was regarded by a section of the public as an immoral performance. Suspicion concerning Swinburne's morals was electrified into certainty by the publication in the following year of *Poems and Ballads*. So violent and universal were the attacks on this book that after a few months it was withdrawn from sale by its publisher. The pressure of friends rather than any change of mind or heart kept Swinburne thereafter from offending British sensibilities in the same way. The pressure of friends, however, did not prevent Swinburne from continuing disastrously to indulge in the "excitements of London life," until finally in 1879 Theodore Watts-Dunton removed the poet to his own house, The Pines, Putney, where he slowly recovered his health and where he lived in the closest retirement until his death from pneumonia on 10 April, 1909. In the years after 1866 Swinburne continued to write voluminously, both plays and lyric poems, and he also published from time to time a number of critical studies written in dithyrambic prose. Among his volumes are: *Songs before Sunrise* (1871), *Bothwell, a Tragedy* (1874), *Songs of Two Nations* (1875), *Erechtheus* (1876), *Poems and Ballads, Second Series* (1878), *Mary Stuart, a Tragedy* (1881), *Tristram of Lyonesse, and Other Poems* (1882), *A Century of Roundels* (1883), *Poems and Ballads, Third Series* (1889), *Astrophel and Other Poems* (1894), *The Tale of Balen* (1896), and *A Channel Passage, and Other Poems* (1904). His critical studies include: *William Blake* (1868), *George Chapman* (1875), *Essays and Studies* (1875), *A Study of Shakespeare* (1880), *A Study of Victor Hugo* (1886), *A Study of Ben Jonson* (1889), and *The Age of Shakespeare* (1908).

Swinburne in an essay on *Wordsworth and Byron* wrote, "It would be an absolute waste of time, for one who assumes it as indisputable, to enter into controversy with one who holds it as disputable, that the two primary and essential qualities of poetry are imagination and harmony; that where these qualities are wanting there can be no poetry, properly so called; and that where these qualities are

perceptible in the highest degree, there, even though they should be unaccompanied and unsupported by any other great quality whatever—even though the ethical or critical faculty should be conspicuous by its absence—there, and only there, is the best and highest poetry.” This definition of poetry is at least useful to indicate the qualities for which Swinburne’s own verse is pre-eminent. Whether or not Swinburne had the highest poetical imagination may be a question, but there can be no doubt about his lyrical fervor and his unparalleled mastery of the rhythmical possibilities of the language.

CHORUSES FROM *ATALANTA IN CALYDON*¹

I

WHEN the hounds of spring are on winter’s traces,

The mother of months² in meadow or plain

Fills the shadows and windy places

With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,³

For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,

Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
With a clamor of waters, and with might;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendor and speed of thy feet;
For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers,

Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,

Fold our hands round her knees, and cling?
O that man’s heart were as fire and could spring to her,

Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring!

For the stars and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,

And the southwest-wind and the west-wind sing.

¹The following poems are reprinted from the collected edition of Swinburne’s poems, in six volumes, with the permission of Messrs. Harper and Brothers.

²The moon, Artemis.

³See note to Arnold’s *Philomela* above. Itylus was the son of Procne, the nephew of Philomela (the nightingale).

For winter’s rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that wins;
And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
Ripe grasses trammel a traveling foot,
The faint fresh flame of the young year
flushes

From leaf to flower and flower to fruit;
And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,
And the oat is heard above the lyre,
And the hoofed heel of a satyr crushes
The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
Follows with dancing and fills with delight
The Mænad and the Bassarid;⁴
And soft as lips that laugh and hide
The laughing leaves of the trees divide,
And screen from seeing and leave in sight
The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal’s hair
Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;
The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
Her bright breast shortening into sighs;
The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,
But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare
The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.

II

Before the beginning of years
There came to the making of man
Time, with a gift of tears;
Grief, with a glass that ran;
Pleasure, with pain for leaven;
Summer, with flowers that fell;
Remembrance fallen from heaven,
And madness risen from hell;

⁴Bacchantes, worshippers of Bacchus.

Strength without hands to smite;
 Love that endures for a breath:
 Night, the shadow of light,
 And life, the shadow of death.

And the high gods took in hand
 Fire, and the falling of tears,
 And a measure of sliding sand
 From under the feet of the years;
 And froth and drift of the sea;
 And dust of the laboring earth;
 And bodies of things to be
 In the houses of death and of birth;
 And wrought with weeping and laughter,
 And fashioned with loathing and love,
 With life before and after
 And death beneath and above,
 For a day and a night and a morrow,
 That his strength might endure for a span
 With travail and heavy sorrow,
 The holy spirit of man.

From the winds of the north and the south
 They gathered as unto strife;
 They breathed upon his mouth,
 They filled his body with life;
 Eyesight and speech they wrought
 For the veils of the soul therein,
 A time for labor and thought,
 A time to serve and to sin;
 They gave him light in his ways,
 And love, and a space for delight,
 And beauty and length of days,
 And night, and sleep in the night.
 His speech is a burning fire;
 With his lips he travaileth;
 In his heart is a blind desire,
 In his eyes foreknowledge of death;
 He weaves, and is clothed with derision;
 Sows, and he shall not reap;
 His life is a watch or a vision
 Between a sleep and a sleep.

III

We have seen thee, O Love, thou art fair;
 thou art goodly, O Love;
 Thy wings make light in the air as the wings
 of a dove.
 Thy feet are as winds that divide the stream
 of the sea;
 Earth is thy covering to hide thee, the gar-
 ment of thee.

Thou art swift and subtle and blind as a
 flame of fire;
 Before thee the laughter, behind thee the
 tears of desire;
 And twain go forth beside thee, a man with
 a maid;
 Her eyes are the eyes of a bride whom delight
 makes afraid;
 As the breath in the buds that stir is her
 bridal breath:
 But Fate is the name of her; and his name
 is Death.

For an evil blossom was born
 Of sea-foam and the frothing of blood,
 Blood-red and bitter of fruit,
 And the seed of it laughter and tears,
 And the leaves of it madness and scorn;
 A bitter flower from the bud,
 Sprung of the sea without root,
 Sprung without graft from the years

The weft of the world was untorn
 That is woven of the day on the night,
 The hair of the hours was not white
 Nor the raiment of time overworn,
 When a wonder, a world's delight,
 A perilous goddess was born;
 And the waves of the sea as she came
 Clove, and the foam at her feet,
 Fawning, rejoiced to bring forth
 A fleshly blossom, a flame
 Filling the heavens with heat
 To the cold white ends of the north.

And in the air the clamorous birds,
 And men upon earth that hear
 Sweet articulate words
 Sweetly divided apart,
 And in shallow and channel and mere
 The rapid and footless herds,
 Rejoiced, being foolish of heart.

For all they said upon earth,
 She is fair, she is white like a dove,
 And the life of the world in her breath
 Breathes, and is born at her birth;
 For they knew thee for mother of love,
 And knew thee not mother of death.

What hadst thou to do being born,
 Mother, when winds were at ease,
 As a flower of the springtime of corn,
 A flower of the foam of the seas?

For bitter thou wast from thy birth,
 Aphrodite, a mother of strife;
 For before thee some rest was on earth,
 A little respite from tears,
 A little pleasure of life;
 For life was not then as thou art,
 But as one that waxeth in years
 Sweet-spoken, a fruitful wife;
 Earth had no thorn, and desire
 No sting, neither death any dart;
 What hadst thou to do amongst these,
 Thou, clothed with a burning fire,
 Thou, girt with sorrow of heart,
 Thou, sprung of the seed of the seas
 As an ear from a seed of corn,
 As a brand plucked forth of a pyre,
 As a ray shed forth of the morn,
 For division of soul and disease,
 For a dart and a sting and a thorn?
 What ailed thee then to be born?

Was there not evil enough,
 Mother, and anguish on earth
 Born with a man at his birth,
 Wastes underfoot, and above
 Storm out of heaven, and dearth
 Shaken down from the shining thereof,
 Wrecks from afar overseas
 And peril of shallow and firth,
 And tears that spring and increase
 In the barren places of mirth,
 That thou, having wings as a dove,
 Being girt with desire for a girth,
 That thou must come after these,
 That thou must lay on him love?

Thou shouldst not so have been born:
 But death should have risen with thee,
 Mother, and visible fear,
 Grief, and the wringing of hands,
 And noise of many that mourn;
 The smitten bosom, the knee
 Bowed, and in each man's ear
 A cry as of perishing lands,
 A moan as of people in prison,
 A tumult of infinite griefs;
 And thunder of storm on the sands,
 And wailing of wives on the shore;
 And under thee newly arisen
 Loud shoals and shipwrecking reefs,
 Fierce air and violent light;
 Sail rent and sundering oar,
 Darkness, and noises of night;
 Clashing of streams in the sea,

Wave against wave as a sword,
 Clamor of currents, and foam;
 Rains making ruin on earth,
 Winds that wax ravenous and roam
 As wolves in a wolfish horde;
 Fruits growing faint in the tree,
 And blind things dead in their birth;
 Famine, and blighting of corn,
 When thy time was come to be born.

All these we know of; but thee
 Who shall discern or declare?
 In the uttermost ends of the sea
 The light of thine eyelids and hair,
 The light of thy bosom as fire
 Between the wheel of the sun
 And the flying flames of the air?
 Wilt thou turn thee not yet nor have pity,
 But abide with despair and desire
 And the crying of armies undone,
 Lamentation of one with another
 And breaking of city by city;
 The dividing of friend against friend,
 The severing of brother and brother;
 Wilt thou utterly bring to an end?
 Have mercy, mother!

For against all men from of old
 Thou hast set thine hand as a curse,
 And cast out gods from their places.
 These things are spoken of thee.
 Strong kings and goodly with gold
 Thou has found out arrows to pierce,
 And made their kingdoms and races
 As dust and surf of the sea.
 All these, overburdened with woes
 And with length of their days waxen weak,
 Thou slewest; and sentest moreover
 Upon Tyro¹ an evil thing,
 Rent hair and a fetter and blows
 Making bloody the flower of the cheek,
 Though she lay by a god as a lover,
 Though fair, and the seed of a king.
 For of old, being full of thy fire,
 She endured not longer to wear
 On her bosom a saffron vest,
 On her shoulder an ashwood quiver;
 Being mixed and made one through desire
 With Enipeus, and all her hair
 Made moist with his mouth, and her
 breast
 Filled full of the foam of the river.

¹The wife of Cretheus. She was loved by Enipeus, Macedonian river-god.

ITYLUS¹

SWALLOW, my sister, O sister swallow,
How can thine heart be full of the spring?
A thousand summers are over and dead.

What hast thou found in the spring to follow?

What hast thou found in thine heart to sing?

What wilt thou do when the summer is shed?

O swallow sister, O fair swift swallow,
Why wilt thou fly after spring to the south,
The soft south whither thine heart is set?
Shall not the grief of the old time follow?
Shall not the song thereof cleave to thy mouth?
Hast thou forgotten ere I forget?

Sister, my sister, O fleet sweet swallow,
Thy way is long to the sun and the south;
But I, fulfilled of my heart's desire,
Shedding my song upon height, upon hollow,
From tawny body and sweet small mouth
Feed the heart of the night with fire.

I the nightingale all spring through,
O swallow, sister, O changing swallow,
All spring through till the spring be done,
Clothed with the light of the night on the dew,
Sing, while the hours and the wild birds follow,
Take flight and follow and find the sun.

Sister, my sister, O soft light swallow,
Though all things feast in the spring's guest-chamber,
How hast thou heart to be glad thereof yet?
For where thou fliest I shall not follow,
Till life forget and death remember,
Till thou remember and I forget.

Swallow, my sister, O singing swallow,
I know not how thou hast heart to sing.
Hast thou the heart? is it all past over?

¹This and the four following poems are from *Poems and Ballads*, First Series. Concerning Itylus see notes above to the first chorus from *Atalanta in Calydon* and to Arnold's *Philomela*. It is Philomela, the nightingale, not Procne, her "sister swallow" and the mother of Itylus, who here laments the slain boy.

Thy lord the summer is good to follow,
And fair the feet of thy lover the spring:
But what wilt thou say to the spring thy lover?

O swallow, sister, O fleeting swallow,
My heart in me is a molten ember
And over my head the waves have met.
But thou wouldst tarry or I would follow,
Could I forget or thou remember,
Couldst thou remember and I forget.

O sweet stray sister, O shifting swallow,
The heart's division divideth us.
Thy heart is light as a leaf of a tree;
But mine goes forth among sea-gulfs hollow
To the place of the slaying of Itylus,
The feast of Daulis, the Thracian sea.

O swallow, sister, O rapid swallow,
I pray thee sing not a little space.
Are not the roofs and the lintels wet?
The woven web that was plain to follow,
The small slain body, the flowerlike face,
Can I remember if thou forget?

O sister, sister, thy first-begotten!
The hands that cling and the feet that follow,
The voice of the child's blood crying yet
Who hath remembered me? who hath forgotten?
Thou hast forgotten, O summer swallow,
But the world shall end when I forget.

SATIA TE SANGUINE

IF YOU loved me ever so little,
I could bear the bonds that gall,
I could dream the bonds were brittle;
You do not love me at all.

O beautiful lips, O bosom
More white than the moon's and warm,
A sterile, a ruinous blossom
Is blown your way in a storm.

As the lost white feverish limbs
Of the Lesbian Sappho, adrift
In foam where the sea-weed swims,
Swam loose for the streams to lift,

My heart swims blind in a sea
That stuns me; swims to and fro,
And gathers to windward and lee
Lamentation, and mourning, and woe.

A broken, an emptied boat,
 Sea saps it, winds blow apart,
 Sick and adrift and afloat,
 The barren waif of a heart.

Where, when the gods would be cruel,
 Do they go for a torture? where
 Plant thorns, set pain like a jewel?
 Ah, not in the flesh, not there!

The racks of earth and the rods
 Are weak as foam on the sands;
 In the heart is the prey for gods,
 Who crucify hearts, not hands.

Mere pangs corrode and consume,
 Dead when life dies in the brain;
 In the infinite spirit is room
 For the pulse of an infinite pain.

I wish you were dead, my dear;
 I would give you, had I to give,
 Some death too bitter to fear;
 It is better to die than live.

I wish you were stricken of thunder
 And burnt with a bright flame through,
 Consumed and cloven in sunder,
 I dead at your feet like you.

If I could but know after all,
 I might cease to hunger and ache,
 Though your heart were ever so small,
 If it were not a stone or a snake.

You are crueler, you that we love,
 Than hatred, hunger, or death;
 You have eyes and breasts like a dove,
 And you kill men's hearts with a breath.

As plague in a poisonous city
 Insults and exults on her dead,
 So you, when pallid for pity
 Comes love, and fawns to be fed.

As a tame beast writhes and wheedles,
 He fawns to be fed with wiles;
 You carve him a cross of needles,
 And whet them sharp as your smiles.

He is patient of thorn and whip,
 He is dumb under axe or dart;
 You suck with a sleepy red lip
 The wet red wounds in his heart.

You thrill as his pulses dwindle,
 You brighten and warm as he bleeds,
 With insatiable eyes that kindle
 And insatiable mouth that feeds.

Your hands nailed love to the tree,
 You stripped him, scourged him with
 rods,
 And drowned him deep in the sea
 That hides the dead and their gods.

And for all this, die will he not;
 There is no man sees him but I;
 You came and went and forgot;
 I hope he will some day die.

A MATCH

IF LOVE were what the rose is,
 And I were like the leaf,
 Our lives would grow together
 In sad or singing weather,
 Blown fields or flowerful closes,
 Green pleasure or gray grief;
 If love were what the rose is,
 And I were like the leaf.

If I were what the words are,
 And love were like the tune,
 With double sound and single
 Delight our lips would mingle,
 With kisses glad as birds are
 That get sweet rain at noon;
 If I were what the words are,
 And love were like the tune.

If you were life, my darling,
 And I your love were death,
 We'd shine and snow together
 Ere March made sweet the weather
 With daffodil and starling
 And hours of fruitful breath;
 If you were life, my darling,
 And I your love were death.

If you were thrall to sorrow,
 And I were page to joy,
 We'd play for lives and seasons
 With loving looks and treasons
 And tears of night and morrow
 And laughs of maid and boy;
 If you were thrall to sorrow,
 And I were page to joy.

If you were April's lady,
 And I were lord in May,
 We'd throw with leaves for hours
 And draw for days with flowers,
 Till day like night were shady
 And night were bright like day;
 If you were April's lady,
 And I were lord in May.

If you were queen of pleasure,
 And I were king of pain,
 We'd hunt down love together,
 Pluck out his flying-feather,
 And teach his feet a measure,
 And find his mouth a rein;
 If you were queen of pleasure,
 And I were king of pain.

THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE¹

HERE, where the world is quiet;
 Here, where all trouble seems
 Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
 In doubtful dreams of dreams;
 I watch the green field growing
 For reaping folk and sowing,
 For harvest-time and mowing,
 A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
 And men that laugh and weep;
 Of what may come hereafter
 For men that sow to reap:
 I am weary of days and hours,
 Blown buds of barren flowers,
 Desires and dreams and powers
 And everything but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbor,
 And far from eye or ear
 Wan waves and wet winds labor,
 Weak ships and spirits steer;
 They drive adrift, and whither
 They wot not who make thither;
 But no such winds blow hither,
 And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice,
 No heather-flower or vine,
 But bloomless buds of poppies,
 Green grapes of Proserpine,

Pale beds of blowing rushes
 Where no leaf blooms or blushes:
 Save this whereout she crushes
 For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,
 In fruitless fields of corn,
 They bow themselves and slumber
 All night till light is born;
 And like a soul belated,
 In hell and heaven unmated,
 By cloud and mist abated
 Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven,
 He too with death shall dwell,
 Nor wake with wings in heaven,
 Nor weep for pains in hell;
 Though one were fair as roses,
 His beauty clouds and closes;
 And well though love reposes,
 In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
 Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
 Who gathers all things mortal
 With cold immortal hands;
 Her languid lips are sweeter
 Than love's who fears to greet her
 To men that mix and meet her
 From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
 She waits for all men born;
 Forgets the earth her mother,²
 The life of fruits and corn;
 And spring and seed and swallow
 Take wing for her and follow
 Where summer song rings hollow
 And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
 The old loves with wearier wings;
 And all dead years draw thither,
 And all disastrous things;
 Dead dreams of days forsaken,
 Blind buds that snows have shaken,
 Wild leaves that winds have taken,
 Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,
 And joy was never sure;
 To-day will die to-morrow;
 Time stoops to no man's lure;

¹Proserpine was the wife of Pluto and queen of the lower world.

²Her mother was Demeter, goddess of the earth.

And love, grown faint and fretful,
 With lips but half regretful
 Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
 Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
 From hope and fear set free,
 We thank with brief thanksgiving
 Whatever gods may be
 That no life lives for ever;
 That dead men rise up never;
 That even the weariest river
 Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
 Nor any change of light:
 Nor sound of waters shaken,
 Nor any sound or sight:
 Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
 Nor days nor things diurnal;
 Only the sleep eternal
 In an eternal night.

AN INTERLUDE

IN THE greenest growth of the Maytime,
 I rode where the woods were wet,
 Between the dawn and the daytime;
 The spring was glad that we met.

There was something the season wanted,
 Though the ways and the woods smelt
 sweet;
 The breath at your lips that panted,
 The pulse of the grass at your feet.

You came, and the sun came after,
 And the green grew golden above;
 And the flag-flowers lightened with laughter,
 And the meadow-sweet shook with love.

Your feet in the full-grown grasses
 Moved soft as a weak wind blows;
 You passed me as April passes,
 With face made out of a rose.

By the stream where the stems were slender,
 Your bright foot paused at the sedge;
 It might be to watch the tender
 Light leaves in the springtime hedge,

On boughs that the sweet month blanches
 With flowery frost of May;
 It might be a bird in the branches,
 It might be a thorn in the way.

I waited to watch you linger
 With foot drawn back from the dew,
 Till a sunbeam straight like a finger
 Struck sharp through the leaves at you.

And a bird overhead sang *Follow*,
 And a bird to the right sang *Here*;
 And the arch of the leaves was hollow,
 And the meaning of May was clear.

I saw where the sun's hand pointed,
 I knew what the bird's note said;
 By the dawn and the dewfall anointed,
 You were queen by the gold on your head.

As the glimpse of a burnt-out ember
 Recalls a regret of the sun,
 I remember, forget, and remember
 What Love saw done and undone.

I remember the way we parted,
 The day and the way we met;
 You hoped we were both broken-hearted,
 And knew we should both forget.

And May with her world in flower
 Seemed still to murmur and smile
 As you murmured and smiled for an hour;
 I saw you turn at the stile.

A hand like a white wood-blossom
 You lifted, and waved, and passed,
 With head hung down to the bosom,
 And pale, as it seemed, at last.

And the best and the worst of this is
 That neither is most to blame
 If you've forgotten my kisses
 And I've forgotten your name.

HERTHA¹

I AM that which began;
 Out of me the years roll;
 Out of me God and man;
 I am equal and whole;
 God changes, and man, and the form of them
 bodily; I am the soul.

¹This and the two following poems are from *Songs before Sunrise*. Hertha (or Nerthus) was the Germanic earth-mother, goddess of fertility and growing things

Before ever land was,
 Before ever the sea,
 Or soft hair of the grass,
 Or fair limbs of the tree,
 Or the flesh-colored fruit of my branches, I
 was, and thy soul was in me.

First life on my sources
 First drifted and swam;
 Out of me are the forces
 That save it or damn;
 Out of me man and woman, and wild-beast
 and bird; before God was, I am.

Beside or above me
 Nought is there to go;
 Love or unlove me,
 Unknow me or know,
 I am that which unloves me and loves; I am
 stricken, and I am the blow.

I the mark that is missed
 And the arrows that miss,
 I the mouth that is kissed
 And the breath in the kiss,
 The search, and the sought, and the seeker,
 the soul and the body that is.

I am the thing which blesses
 My spirit elate;
 That which caresses
 With hands uncreate
 My limbs unbegotten that measure the
 length of the measure of fate.

But what thing dost thou now,
 Looking Godward, to cry
 "I am I, thou art thou,
 I am low, thou art high"?
 I am thou, whom thou seekest to find him;
 find thou but thyself, thou art I.

I the grain and the furrow,
 "The plough-cloven clod
 And the ploughshare drawn thorough,
 The germ and the sod,
 The deed and the doer, the seed and the
 sower, the dust which is God.

Hast thou known how I fashioned thee,
 Child, underground?
 Fire that impassioned thee,
 Iron that bound,
 Dim changes of water, what thing of all these
 hast thou known of or found?

Canst thou say in thine heart
 Thou hast seen with thine eyes
 With what cunning of art
 Thou wast wrought in what wise,
 By what force of what stuff thou wast shapen,
 and shown on my breast to the skies?

Who hath given, who hath sold it thee,
 Knowledge of me?
 Hath the wilderness told it thee?
 Hast thou learned of the sea?
 Hast thou communed in spirit with night?
 have the winds taken counsel with
 thee?

Have I set such a star
 To show light on thy brow
 That thou sawest from afar
 What I show to thee now?
 Have ye spoken as brethren together, the sun
 and the mountains and thou?

What is here, dost thou know it?
 What was, hast thou known?
 Prophet nor poet
 Nor tripod nor throne!
 Nor spirit nor flesh can make answer, but
 only thy mother alone.

Mother, not maker,
 Born, and not made;
 Though her children forsake her,
 Allured or afraid,
 Praying prayers to the God of their fashion,
 she stirs not for all that have prayed.

A creed is a rod,
 And a crown is of night;
 But this thing is God,
 To be man with thy might,
 To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit,
 and live out thy life as the light.

I am in thee to save thee,
 As my soul in thee saith;
 Give thou as I gave thee,
 Thy life-blood and breath,
 Green leaves of thy labor, white flowers of
 thy thought, and red fruit of thy
 death.

— — — — —
I.e., nor priest nor king.

Be the ways of thy giving
 As mine were to thee;
 The free life of thy living,
 Be the gift of it free;
 Not as servant to lord, nor as master to slave,
 shalt thou give thee to me.

O children of banishment,
 Souls overcast,
 Were the lights ye see vanish meant
 Always to last,
 Ye would know not the sun overshadowing the
 shadows and stars overpast.

I that saw where ye trod
 The dim paths of the night
 Set the shadow called God
 In your skies to give light;
 But the morning of manhood is risen, and the
 shadowless soul is in sight.

The tree many-rooted
 That swells to the sky
 With frondage red-fruited,
 The life-tree am I;
 In the buds of your lives is the sap of my
 leaves: ye shall live and not die.

But the Gods of your fashion
 That take and that give,
 In their pity and passion
 That scourge and forgive,
 They are worms that are bred in the bark that
 falls off; they shall die and not live.

My own blood is what stanches
 The wounds in my bark;
 Stars caught in my branches
 Make day of the dark,
 And are worshiped as suns till the sunrise
 shall tread out their fires as a spark.

Where dead ages hide under
 The live roots of the tree,
 In my darkness the thunder
 Makes utterance of me;
 In the clash of my boughs with each other ye
 hear the waves sound of the sea.

That noise is of Time,
 As his feathers are spread
 And his feet set to climb
 Through the boughs overhead,
 And my foliage rings round him and rustles,
 and branches are bent with his tread.

The storm-winds of ages
 Blow through me and cease,
 The war-wind that rages,
 The spring-wind of peace,
 Ere the breath of them roughen my tresses,
 ere one of my blossoms increase.

All sounds of all changes,
 All shadows and lights
 On the world's mountain-ranges
 And stream-riven heights,
 Whose tongue is the wind's tongue and lan-
 guage of storm-clouds on earth-shak-
 ing nights;

All forms of all faces,
 All works of all hands
 In unsearchable places
 Of time-stricken lands,
 All death and all life, and all reigns and all
 ruins, drop through me as sands.

Though sore be my burden
 And more than ye know,
 And my growth have no guerdon
 But only to grow,
 Yet I fail not of growing for lightnings above
 me or deathworms below.

These too have their part in me,
 As I too in these;
 Such fire is at heart in me,
 Such sap is this tree's,
 Which hath in it all sounds and all secrets of
 infinite lands and of seas.

In the spring-colored hours
 When my mind was as May's,
 There brake forth of me flowers
 By centuries of days,
 Strong blossoms with perfume of manhood,
 shot out from my spirit as rays.

And the sound of them springing
 And smell of their shoots
 Were as warmth and sweet singing
 And strength to my roots;
 And the lives of my children made perfect
 with freedom of soul were my fruits.

I bid you but be;
 I have need not of prayer;
 I have need of you free
 As your mouths of mine air;
 That my heart may be greater within me,
 beholding the fruits of me fair.

More fair than strange fruit is
 Of faiths ye espouse;
 In me only the root is
 That blooms in your boughs;
 Behold now your God that ye made you, to
 feed him with faith of your vows.

In the darkening and whitening
 Abysses adored,
 With dayspring and lightning
 For lamp and for sword,
 God thunders in heaven, and his angels are
 red with the wrath of the Lord.

O my sons, O too dutiful
 Toward Gods not of me,
 Was not I enough beautiful?
 Was it hard to be free?
 For behold, I am with you, am in you and of
 you; look forth now and see.

Lo, winged with world's wonders,
 With miracles shod,
 With the fires of his thunders
 For raiment and rod,
 God trembles in heaven, and his angels are
 white with the terror of God.

For his twilight is come on him,
 His anguish is here;
 And his spirits gaze dumb on him,
 Grown gray from his fear;
 And his hour taketh hold on him stricken,
 the last of his infinite year.

Thought made him and breaks him,
 Truth slays and forgives;
 But to you, as time takes him,
 This new thing it gives,
 Even love, the beloved Republic, that feeds
 upon freedom and lives.

For truth only is living,
 Truth only is whole,
 And the love of his giving
 Man's polestar and pole;
 Man, pulse of my center, and fruit of my
 body, and seed of my soul.

One birth of my bosom;
 One beam of mine eye;
 One topmost blossom
 That scales the sky;
 Man, equal and one with me, man that is
 made of me, man that is I.

TO WALT WHITMAN IN AMERICA

SEND but a song oversea for us,
 Heart of their hearts who are free,
 Heart of their singer, to be for us
 More than our singing can be;
 Ours, in the tempest at error,
 With no light but the twilight of terror;
 Send us a song oversea!

Sweet-smelling of pine-leaves and grasses,
 And blown as a tree through and through
 With the winds of the keen mountain-passes,
 And tender as sun-smitten dew;
 Sharp-tongued as the winter that shakes
 The wastes of your limitless lakes,
 Wide-eyed as the sea-line's blue.

O strong-winged soul with prophetic
 Lips hot with the bloodbeats of song,
 With tremor of heartstrings magnetic,
 With thoughts as thunders in throng,
 With consonant ardors of chords
 That pierce men's souls as with swords
 And hale them hearing along,

Make us too music, to be with us
 As a word from a world's heart warm,
 To sail the dark as a sea with us,
 Full-sailed, outsinging the storm,
 A song to put fire in our ears
 Whose burning shall burn up tears,
 Whose sign bid battle reform;

A note in the ranks of a clarion,
 A word in the wind of cheer,
 To consume as with lightning the carrion
 That makes time foul for us here;
 In the air that our dead things infest
 A blast of the breath of the west,
 Till east way as west way is clear.

Cut of the sun beyond sunset,
 From the evening whence morning shall be,
 With the rollers in measureless onset,
 With the van of the storming sea,
 With the world-wide wind, with the breath
 That breaks ships driven upon death,
 With the passion of all things free,

With the sea-steeds footless and frantic,
 White myriads for death to bestride
 In the charge of the ruining Atlantic
 Where deaths by regiments ride,

With clouds and clamors of waters,
 With a long note shriller than slaughter's
 On the furrowless fields world-wide,

With terror, with ardor and wonder,
 With the soul of the season that wakes
 When the weight of a whole year's thunder
 In the tidestream of autumn breaks,
 Let the flight of the wide-winged word
 Come over, come in and be heard,
 Take form and fire for our sakes.

For a continent bloodless with travail
 Here toils and brawls as it can,
 And the web of it who shall unravel
 Of all that peer on the plan;
 Would fain grow men, but they grow not,
 And fain be free, but they know not
 One name for freedom and man?

One name, not twain for division;
 One thing, not twain, from the birth;
 Spirit and substance and vision,
 Worth more than worship is worth;
 Unbeheld, unadored, undivined,
 The cause, the center, the mind,
 The secret and sense of the earth.

Here as a weaking in irons,
 Here as a weanling in bands,
 As a prey that the stake-net environs,
 Our life that we looked for stands;
 And the man-child naked and dear,
 Democracy, turns on us here
 Eyes trembling with tremulous hands.

It sees not what season shall bring to it
 Sweet fruit of its bitter desire;
 Few voices it hears yet sing to it,
 Few pulses of hearts reaspire;
 Foresees not time, nor forehears
 The noises of imminent years,
 Earthquake, and thunder, and fire:

When crowned and weaponed and curbless
 It shall walk without helm or shield
 The bare burnt furrows and herbless
 Of war's last flame-stricken field,
 Till godlike, equal with time,
 It stand in the sun sublime,
 In the godhead of man revealed.

Round your people and over them
 Light like raiment is drawn,

Close as a garment to cover them
 Wrought not of mail nor of lawn;
 Here, with hope hardly to wear,
 Naked nations and bare
 Swim, sink, strike out for the dawn.

Chains are here, and a prison,
 Kings, and subjects, and shame.
 If the God upon you be arisen,
 How should our songs be the same?
 How, in confusion of change,
 How shall we sing, in a strange
 Land, songs praising his name?

God is buried and dead to us,
 Even the spirit of earth,
 Freedom; so have they said to us,
 Some with mocking and mirth,
 Some with heartbreak and tears;
 And a God without eyes, without ears,
 Who shall sing of him, dead in the birth?

The earth-god Freedom, the lonely
 Face lightening, the footprint unshod,
 Not as one man crucified only
 Nor scourged with but one life's rod;
 The soul that is substance of nations,
 Reincarnate with fresh generations;
 The great god Man, which is God.

But in weariest of years and obscurest
 Doth it live not at heart of all things,
 The one God and one spirit, a purest
 Life, fed from unstanchable springs?
 Within love, within hatred it is,
 And its seed in the stripe as the kiss,
 And in slaves is the germ, and in kings.

Freedom we call it, for holier
 Name of the soul's there is none;
 Surelier it labors, if slower,
 Than the meters of star or of sun;
 Slower than life into breath,
 Surelier than time into death,
 It moves till its labor be done.

Till the motion be done and the measure
 Circling through season and clime,
 Slumber and sorrow and pleasure,
 Vision of virtue and crime;
 Till consummate with conquering eyes,
 A soul disembodied, it rise
 From the body transfigured of time.

Till it rise and remain and take station
 With the stars of the worlds that rejoice;
 Till the voice of its heart's exultation
 Be as theirs an invariable voice;
 By no discord of evil estranged,
 By no pause, by no breach in it changed,
 By no clash in the chord of its choice.

It is one with the world's generations,
 With the spirit, the star, and the sod;
 With the kingless and king-stricken nations,
 With the cross, and the chain, and the rod;
 The most high, the most secret, most lonely,
 The earth-soul Freedom, that only
 Lives, and that only is God.

THE OBLATION

Ask nothing more of me, sweet;
 All I can give you I give.
 Heart of my heart, were it more,
 More would be laid at your feet:
 Love that should help you to live,
 Song that should spur you to soar.

All things were nothing to give
 Once to have sense of you more,
 Touch you and taste of you sweet,
 Think you and breathe you and live,
 Swept of your wings as they soar,
 Trodden by chance of your feet.

I that have love and no more
 Give you but love of you, sweet:
 He that hath more, let him give;
 He that hath wings, let him soar;
 Mine is the heart at your feet
 Here, that must love you to live.

A FORSAKEN GARDEN¹

IN A coign of the cliff between lowland and
 highland,
 At the sea-down's edge between windward
 and lee,
 Walled round with rocks as an inland island,
 The ghost of a garden fronts the sea.
 A girdle of brushwood and thorn encloses
 The steep square slope of the blossomless
 bed
 Where the weeds that grew green from the
 graves of its roses
 Now lie dead.

The fields fall southward, abrupt and
 broken,
 To the low last edge of the long lone
 land.
 If a step should sound or a word be spoken,
 Would a ghost not rise at the strange
 guest's hand?
 So long have the gray bare walks lain guest-
 less,
 Through branches and briers if a man
 make way,
 He shall find no life but the sea-wind's,
 restless
 Night and day.

The dense hard passage is blind and stifled
 That crawls by a track none turn to
 climb
 To the strait waste place that the years have
 rified
 Of all but the thorns that are touched not
 of time.
 The thorns he spares when the rose is taken;
 The rocks are left when he wastes the
 plain.
 The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-
 shaken,
 These remain.

Not a flower to be pressed of the foot that
 falls not;
 As the heart of a dead man the seed-plots
 are dry;
 From the thicket of thorns whence the night-
 ingale calls not,
 Could she call, there were never a rose to
 reply.
 Over the meadows that blossom and wither
 Rings but the note of a sea-bird's song;
 Only the sun and the rain come hither
 All year long.

The sun burns sere and the rain dishevels
 One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless
 breath.
 Only the wind here hovers and revels
 In a round where life seems barren as
 death.
 Here there was laughing of old, there was
 weeping,
 Haply, of lovers none ever will know,
 Whose eyes went seaward a hundred sleeping
 Years ago.

¹This and the following poem are from *Poems and Ballads*, Second Series.

Heart handfast in heart as they stood, "Look
thither,"

Did he whisper? "look forth from the
flowers to the sea;

For the foam-flowers endure when the rose-
blossoms wither,

And men that love lightly may die—but
we?"

And the same wind sang and the same waves
whitened,

And or ever the garden's last petals were
shed,

In the lips that had whispered, the eyes that
had lightened,

Love was dead.

Or they loved their life through, and then
went whither?

And were one to the end—but what end
who knows?

Love deep as the sea as a rose must wither,
As the rose-red seaweed that mocks the
rose.

Shall the dead take thought for the dead to
love them?

What love was ever as deep as a grave?
They are loveless now as the grass above
them

Or the wave.

All are at one now, roses and lovers,

Not known of the cliffs and the fields and
the sea.

Not a breath of the time that has been hovers
In the air now soft with a summer to be.

Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons
hereafter

Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now
or weep,

When as they that are free now of weeping
and laughter

We shall sleep.

Here death may deal not again for ever;

Here change may come not till all change
end.

From the graves they have made they shall
rise up never,

Who have left nought living to ravage and
rend.

Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild ground
growing,

While the sun and the rain live, these shall
be:

Till a last wind's breath upon all these
blowing

Roll the sea.

Till the slow sea rise and the sheer cliff
crumble,

Till terrace and meadow the deep gulfs
drink,

Till the strength of the waves of the high
tides humble

The fields that lessen, the rocks that
shrink,

Here now in his triumph where all things
falter,

Stretched out on the spoils that his own
hand spread,

As a god self-slain on his own strange altar,
Death lies dead.

AVE ATQUE VALE

IN MEMORY OF CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

*Nous devrions pourtant lui porter quelques
fleurs;*

*Les morts, les pauvres mortes, ont de grandes
douleurs,*

*Et quand Octobre souffle, émondeur des vieux
arbres,*

*Son vent mélancolique à l'entour de leur
marbres,*

Certe, ils doivent trouver les vivants bien ingrats.¹
—Les Fleurs du Mal.

I

SHALL I strew on thee rose or rue or laurel,
Brother, on this that was the veil of
thee?

Or quiet sea-flower molded by the sea,
Or simplest growth of meadow-sweet or
sorrel,

Such as the summer-sleepy Dryads
weave,

Waked up by snow-soft sudden rains at
eve?

Or wilt thou rather, as on earth before,
Half-faded fiery blossoms, pale with
heat

¹These lines from Baudelaire may be translated:
Yet we should bear him a few flowers; the dead, the
poor dead, have great sorrows, and when October,
pruner of ancient trees, breathes its sad wind about
their tombs, certainly they must deem the living
very thankless.

And full of bitter summer, but more
sweet
To thee than gleanings of a northern shore
Trod by no tropic feet?

II

For always thee the fervid languid glories
Allured of heavier suns in mightier skies;
Thine ears knew all the wandering
watery sighs
Where the sea sobs round Lesbian promon-
tories,
The barren kiss of piteous wave to wave
That knows not where is that Leucadian
grave
Which hides too deep the supreme head of
song.¹
Ah, salt and sterile as her kisses were,
The wild sea winds her and the green
gulfs bear
Hither and thither, and vex and work her
wrong,
Blind gods that cannot spare.

III

Thou sawest, in thine old singing season,
brother,
Secrets and sorrows unbeheld of us:
Fierce loves, and lovely leaf-buds
poisonous,
Bare to thy subtler eye, but for none other
Blowing by night in some unbreathed-
in clime;
The hidden harvest of luxurious time,
Sin without shape, and pleasure without
speech;
And where strange dreams in a tumultu-
ous sleep
Make the shut eyes of stricken spirits
weep;
And with each face thou sawest the shadow
on each,
Seeing as men sow men reap.

IV

O sleepless heart and somber soul un-
sleeping,
That were athirst for sleep and no more
life
And no more love, for peace and no
more strife!

¹Sappho, who was born on the island of Lesbos and was said to have cast herself into the sea from the Leucadian promontory.

Now the dim gods of death have in their
keeping
Spirit and body and all the springs of
song,
Is it well now where love can do no
wrong,
Where stingless pleasure has no foam or fang
Behind the unopening closure of her lips?
Is it not well where soul from body slips
And flesh from bone divides without a pang
As dew from flower-bell drips?

V

It is enough; the end and the beginning
Are one thing to thee, who art past the
end.
O hand unclasped of unbeholden friend,
For thee no fruits to pluck, no palms for
winning,
No triumph and no labor and no lust,
Only dead yew-leaves and a little dust.
O quiet eyes wherein the light saith nought,
Whereto the day is dumb, nor any night
With obscure finger silences your sight,
Ner in your speech the sudden soul speaks
thought,
Sleep, and have sleep for light.

VI

Now all strange hours and all strange loves
are over,
Dreams and desires and somber songs
and sweet,
Hast thou found place at the great knees
and feet
Of some pale Titan-woman like a lover,
Such as thy vision here solicited,²
Under the shadow of her fair vast head,
The deep division of prodigious breasts,
The solemn slope of mighty limbs asleep,
The weight of awful tresses that still
keep
The savor and shade of old-world pine-
forests
Where the wet hill-winds weep?

VII

Hast thou found any likeness for thy vision?
O gardener of strange flowers, what bud,
what bloom,
Hast thou found sown, what gathered in
the gloom?
What of despair, of rapture, of derision,

²See Baudelaire's *La Géante*.

What of life is there, what of ill or good?
Are the fruits gray like dust or bright
like blood?

Does the dim ground grow any seed of ours,
The faint fields quicken any terrene root,
In low lands where the sun and moon are
mute
And all the stars keep silence? Are there
flowers
At all, or any fruit?

VIII

Alas, but though my flying song flies after,
O sweet strange elder singer, thy more
fleet
Singing, and footprints of thy fleeter feet,
Some dim derision of mysterious laughter
From the blind tongueless warders of
the dead,
Some gainless glimpse of Proserpine's
veiled head,
Some little sound of unregarded tears
Wept by effaced unprofitable eyes,
And from pale mouths some cadence of
dead sighs—
These only, these the harkening spirit hears,
Sees only such things rise.

IX

Thou art far too far for wings of words to
follow,
Far too far off for thought or any prayer.
What ails us with thee, who art wind and
air?
What ails us gazing where all seen is hollow?
Yet with some fancy, yet with some
desire,
Dreams pursue death as winds a flying
fire,
Our dreams pursue our dead and do not find.
Still, and more swift than they, the thin
flame flies,
The low light fails us in elusive skies,
Still the foiled earnest ear is deaf, and blind
Are still the eluded eyes.

X

Not thee, O never thee, in all time's changes,
Not thee, but this the sound of thy sad
soul,
The shadow of thy swift spirit, this shut
scroll
I lay my hand on, and not death estranges

My spirit from communion of thy
song—

These memories and these melodies that
throng
Veiled porches of a Muse funereal—
These I salute, these touch, these clasp
and fold
As though a hand were in my hand to hold,
Or through mine ears a mourning musical
Of many mourners rolled.

XI

I among these, I also, in such station
As when the pyre was charred, and piled
the sods,
And offering to the dead made, and their
gods,
The old mourners had, standing to make
libation,
I stand, and to the gods and to the dead
Do reverence without prayer or praise,
and shed
Offering to these unknown, the gods of gloom,
And what of honey and spice my seed-
lands bear,
And what I may of fruits in this chilled
air,
And lay, Orestes-like,¹ across the tomb
A curl of severed hair.

XII

But by no hand nor any treason stricken,
Not like the low-lying head of Him, the
King,²
The flame that made of Troy a ruinous
thing,
Thou liest, and on this dust no tears could
quicken
There fall no tears like theirs that all
men hear
Fall tear by sweet imperishable tear
Down the opening leaves of holy poets' pages.
Thee not Orestes, not Electra mourns;
But bending us-ward with memorial urns
The most high Muses that fulfill all ages
Weep, and our God's heart yearns.

XIII

For, sparing of his sacred strength, not often
Among us darkling here the lord of light
Makes manifest his music and his might
In hearts that open and in lips that soften

¹See Æschylus, *Choëphoræ*, 4-8.

²Agamemnon.

With the soft flame and heat of songs
that shine.

Thy lips indeed he touched with bitter
wine,

And nourished them indeed with bitter
bread;

Yet surely from his hand thy soul's food
came,

The fire that scarred thy spirit at his
flame

Was lighted, and thine hungering heart he
fed

Who feeds our hearts with fame.

XIV

Therefore he too now at thy soul's sun-
setting,

God of all suns and songs, he too bends
down

To mix his laurel with thy cypress crown,
And save thy dust from blame and from
forgetting.

Therefore he too, seeing all thou wert
and art,

Compassionate, with sad and sacred
heart,

Mourns thee of many his children the last
dead,

And hallows with strange tears and alien
sighs

Thine unmelodious mouth and sunless
eyes,

And over thine irrevocable head

Sheds light from the under skies.

XV

And one weeps with him in the ways Lethean,
And stains with tears her changing
bosom chill:

That obscure Venus of the hollow hill,¹

That thing transformed which was the
Cytherean,

With lips that lost their Grecian laugh
divine

Long since, and face no more called
Erycine;²

A ghost, a bitter and luxurious god.

Thee also with fair flesh and singing
spell

Did she, a sad and second prey, compel

Into the footless places once more trod,

And shadows hot from hell.

XVI

And now no sacred staff shall break in
blossom;³

No choral salutation lure to light

A spirit sick with perfume and sweet
night

And love's tired eyes and hands and barren
bosom.

There is no help for these things; none
to mend

And none to mar; not all our songs, O
friend,

Will make death clear or make life durable.

Howbeit with rose and ivy and wild vine

And with wild notes about this dust of
thine

At least I fill the place where white dreams
dwell

And wreathe an unseen shrine.

XVII

Sleep; and if life was bitter to thee, pardon,

If sweet, give thanks; thou hast no more
to live;

And to give thanks is good, and to
forgive.

Out of the mystic and the mournful garden

Where all day through thine hands in
barren braid

Wove the sick flowers of secrecy and
shade,

Green buds of sorrow and sin, and remnants
gray,

Sweet-smelling, pale with poison, san-
guine-hearted,

Passions that sprang from sleep and
thoughts that started,

Shall death not bring us all as thee one day
Among the days departed?

¹The allusion is to Tannhäuser who, after spending a year with Lady Venus in the Venusberg, went to Rome and asked for absolution. The pope told him that as little as the dry staff he held in his hand could grow green again, so little could Tannhäuser have God's mercy. After Tannhäuser's departure, however, the staff began to bud, and the pope sent messengers to search for him, but he had gone back to the Venusberg.

¹The Venus of medieval legend, fabled to hold her court in the recesses of the Venusberg, or Hørselberg, in central Germany.

²So called because there was a temple to Aphrodite Urania (the goddess of heavenly love) at Eryx, in Sicily.

XVIII

For thee, O now a silent soul, my brother,
Take at my hands this garland, and
farewell.

* Thin is the leaf, and chill the wintry
smell,

And chill the solemn earth, a fatal mother,
With sadder than the Niobe¹ womb,
And in the hollow of her breasts a tomb.
Content thee, howsoe'er, whose days are
done;

There lies not any troublous thing be-
fore,

Nor sight nor sound to war against thee
more,

For whom all winds are quiet as the sun,
All waters as the shore.

FIRST FOOTSTEPS²

A LITTLE way, more soft and sweet
Than fields aflower with May,
A babe's feet, venturing, scarce complete
A little way.

• Eyes full of dawning day
Look up for mother's eyes to meet,
Too blithe for song to say.

Glad as the golden spring to greet
Its first live leaflet's play,
Love, laughing, leads the little feet
A little way.

THE ROUNDEL

A ROUNDEL is wrought as a ring or a star-
bright sphere,
With craft of delight and with cunning of
sound unsought,

¹Niobe, with fourteen children, boasted of her superiority to the goddess Latona, with her two, whereupon all of Niobe's children were slain.

²This and the following poem are from *A Century of Roundels*. The roundel, or rondel, is a French lyric form having but two rhymes. It commonly has fourteen lines, of which the first two are repeated as the seventh and eighth and as the thirteenth and fourteenth.

That the heart of the hearer may smile if to
pleasure his ear
A roundel is wrought.

Its jewel of music is carven of all or of
aught—

Love, laughter, or mourning—remembrance
of rapture or fear—

That fancy may fashion to hang in the ear of
thought.

As a bird's quick song runs round, and the
hearts in us hear

Pause answer to pause, and again the same
strain caught,

So moves the device whence, round as a
pearl or tear,

A roundel is wrought.

ON THE DEATHS OF
THOMAS CARLYLE AND
GEORGE ELIOT³

Two souls diverse out of our human sight
Pass, followed one with love and each with
wonder:

The stormy sophist with his mouth of
thunder,

Clothed with loud words and mantled in the
might

Of darkness and magnificence of night;
And one whose eye could smite the night
in sunder,

Searching if light or no light were there-
under,

And found in love of loving-kindness light.

Duty divine and Thought with eyes of fire
Still following Righteousness with deep desire

Shone sole and stern before her and above,
Sure stars and sole to steer by; but more
sweet

Shone lower the loveliest lamp for earthly
feet,

The light of little children, and their love.

³From *Tristram of Lyonesse and Other Poems*. Carlyle and George Eliot both died in 1881.

GEORGE MEREDITH (1828-1909)

Meredith was born in Portsmouth on 12 February, 1828. His father was a tailor and naval outfitter doing business there, whose fortunes rapidly declined after the death of Meredith's mother in 1833. The boy's first ten or twelve years were spent at Portsmouth, where his education was begun. Later he attended schools at Southsea, and in 1843 was sent to the Moravian School at Neuwied, on the Rhine, not far from Coblenz. On his return to England at the close of 1844 he was articled to a solicitor in London. He could not, however, see any future for himself in the law, and soon turned to journalism, a calling which he followed regularly for some years, managing to derive a bare subsistence from the work. In 1849 he married Mrs. Nicolls, who was about seven years older than himself, and who was the widowed daughter of Thomas Love Peacock. The marriage was, as Meredith later said, a blunder, and after a few years the two separated. In 1851 Meredith published his first volume of poems, and four years later his first volume of prose, an oriental fantasy entitled *The Shaving of Shagpat*. These volumes at the time attracted little or no notice, and though with the publication of *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859) and of *Modern Love and Other Poems* (1862) he began to be recognized by competent judges as a significant novelist and poet, still, he signally failed to win the generality of readers, and was forced to conclude that he could not hope to make a living from books. He consequently continued his journalistic work, and in 1862 began a period of many years' service, as a reader and editorial adviser to the publishing firm of Chapman and Hall. In 1861 Meredith's wife died, and in 1864 he married Marié Vulliamy, who was his deeply loved companion until her death in 1885. In 1867 the Merediths moved to Flint Cottage, facing Box Hill, near Burford Bridge, in Mickleham, and here Meredith lived through the remainder of his life. Here the great novels of his maturity were written, *Beauchamp's Career* (1876), *The Egoist* (1879), *The Tragic Comedians* (1880), *Diana of the Crossways* (1885), and the more difficult novels of his later years, *One of our Conquerors* (1891), *Lord Ormont and his Aminta* (1894), and *The Amazing Marriage* (1895). Here also were written the poems published in *Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth* (1883), *Ballads and Poems of Tragic Life* (1887), *A Reading of Earth* (1888), *The Empty Purse, and Other Poems* (1892), *Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History* (1898), and *A Reading of Life, with Other Poems* (1901). With the publication of *The Egoist* Meredith's greatness became unmistakably evident, and with *Diana of the Crossways* came something like popular success, particularly in America. In 1905 Meredith received the Order of Merit, a distinguished honor which has been bestowed on only a very few men of letters. He died at Flint Cottage on 18 May, 1909. Burial in Westminster Abbey was refused by the Dean, despite the expressed wish of Edward VII, and he was buried in Dorking Cemetery beside his wife, where he himself had wished to be buried.

The charge of obscurity has frequently been leveled against Meredith's novels and poems. The obscurity, though it is not a serious difficulty in some of his best work, cannot be denied, but it can be explained. Meredith united with profound insight into human character and motives a remarkably quick and restless imagination which hurried him along in a maze of boldly figurative language which sometimes leaves the slower-minded reader perplexed and breathless. In addition, he had too little of the great artist's sense for economy of effort. The riches of his understanding gave him much to say, and at times he forgot that he could scarcely say everything, with the result that, instead of exercising the supreme tact involved in the art of selection and omission, he attempted to compress far more into a sentence or a phrase than the words could hold. Nor is this all, for Meredith accepted without reservations the new gospel of evolution, and attempted to interpret the meaning of life as he felt and experienced it in terms of evolutionary concepts. He thus became a worshiper of Earth as the stern, just mother of men and all that they are, while he continued to believe confidently in the reality of man's spiritual nature. This contradiction in his beliefs he attempted to bridge by intensity of feeling; with the consequence that, particularly in some of his poems, he strained language in the effort to convey through words and images a conviction which was really inarticulate. On the other hand, not only has Meredith's obscurity been exaggerated by some of his critics, but thoughtful readers have long since become assured that the difficulties of his writings are amply compensated by the rewards of his insight and of the truth and depth of his feeling. His was a sane nature, bravely, even heroically, struggling in an age drunken with material "progress" to maintain some hold on immaterial reality.

JUGGLING JERRY¹

I

PITCH here the tent, while the old horse
grazes:

By the old hedge-side we'll halt a stage.
It's nigh my last above the daisies:
My next leaf'll be man's blank page.
Yes, my old girl! and it's no use crying:
Juggler, constable, king, must bow.
One that outjuggles all's been spying
Long to have me, and he has me now.

II

We've traveled times to this old common:
Often we've hung our pots in the gorse.
We've had a stirring life, old woman!
You, and I, and the old gray horse.
Races, and fairs, and royal occasions,
Found us coming to their call:
Now they'll miss us at our stations:
There's a Juggler outjuggles all!

III

Up goes the lark, as if all were jolly!
Over the duck-pond the willow shakes.
Easy to think that grieving's folly,
When the hand's firm as driven stakes!
Ay, when we're strong, and braced, and man-
ful,
Life's a sweet fiddle: but we're a batch
Born to become the Great Juggler's han'ful:
Balls he shies up, and is safe to catch.

IV

Here's where the lads of the village cricket:
I was a lad not wide from here:
Couldn't I whip off the bail from the wicket?
Like an old world those days appear!
Donkey, sheep, geese, and thatched ale-
house—I know them!
They are old friends of my halts, and seem,
Somehow, as if kind thanks I owe them:
Juggling don't hinder the heart's esteem.

V

Juggling's no sin, for we must have victual:
Nature allows us to bait for the fool.
Holding one's own makes us juggle no little;
But, to increase it, hard juggling's the rule.

¹The following poems are reprinted with the per-
mission of Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons from the
Memorial Edition of Meredith's *Works*. *Juggling*
Jerry was published in 1859.

You that are sneering at my profession,
Haven't you juggled a vast amount?
There's the Prime Minister, in one Session,
Juggles more games than my sins'll count

VI

I've murdered insects with mock thunder:
Conscience, for that, in men don't quail.
I've made bread from the bump of wonder:
That's my business, and there's my tale.
Fashion and rank all praised the professor:
Ay! and I've had my smile from the
Queen:
Bravo, Jerry! she meant: God bless her!
Ain't this a sermon on that scene?

VII

I've studied men from my topsy-turvy
Close, and, I reckon, rather true.
Some are fine fellows: some, right scurvy:
Most, a dash between the two.
But it's a woman, old girl, that makes me
Think more kindly of the race:
And it's a woman, old girl, that shakes me
When the Great Juggler I must face.

VIII

We two were married, due and legal:
Honest we've lived since we've been one.
Lord! I could then jump like an eagle:
You danced bright as a bit o' the sun.
Birds in a May-bush we were! right merry!
All night we kissed, we juggled all day.
Joy was the heart of Juggling Jerry!
Now from his old girl he's juggled away.

IX

It's past parsons to console us:
No, nor no doctor fetch for me:
I can die without my bolus;²
Two of a trade, lass, never agree!
Parson and Doctor!—don't they love rarely
Fighting the devil in other men's fields!
Stand up yourself and match him fairly:
Then see how the rascal yields!

X

I, lass, have lived no gypsy, flaunting
Finery while his poor helpmate grubs:
Coin I've stored, and you won't be wanting:
You sha'n't beg from the troughs and tubs.

²Large pill.

Nobly you've stuck to me, though in his kitchen

Many a Marquis would hail you Cook!
Palaces you could have ruled and grown rich in,

But your old Jerry you never forsook.

XI

Hand up the chirper!¹ ripe ale winks in it;
Let's have comfort and be at peace.

Once a stout draught made me light as a linnet.

Cheer up! the Lord must have his lease.
May be—for none see in that black hollow—
It's just a place where we're held in pawn,
And, when the Great Juggler makes as to swallow,

It's just the sword-trick—I ain't quite gone!

XII

Yonder came smells of the gorse, so nutty,
Gold-like and warm: it's the prime of May.

Better than mortar, brick and putty,
Is God's house on a blowing day.

Lean me more up the mound; now I feel it:
All the old heath-smells! Ain't it strange?
There's the world laughing, as if to conceal it,
But He's by us, juggling the change.

XIII

I mind it well, by the sea-beach lying,
Once—it's long gone—when two gulls we beheld,

Which, as the moon got up, were flying
Down a big wave that sparked and swelled.

Crack, went a gun: one fell: the second
Wheeled round him twice, and was off for new luck:

There in the dark her white wing beckoned:—
Drop me a kiss—I'm the bird dead-struck!

THE BEGGAR'S SOLILO- QUY²

I

Now, this, to my notion, is pleasant cheer,
To lie all alone on a ragged heath,
Where your nose isn't sniffing for bones or beer,

But a peat-fire smells like a garden beneath.

The cottagers bustle about the door,
And the girl at the window ties her strings.
She's a dish for a man who's a mind to be poor;
Lord! women are such expensive things.

II

We don't marry beggars, says she: why, no:
It seems that to make 'em is what you do;
And as I can cook, and scour, and sew,
I needn't pay half my victuals for you.
A man for himself should be able to scratch,
But tickling's a luxury:—love, indeed!
Love burns as long as the lucifer match,
Wedlock's the candle! Now, that's my creed.

III

The church-bells sound water-like over the wheat;

And up the long path troop pair after pair.
The man's well-brushed, and the woman looks neat:

It's man and woman everywhere!
Unless, like me, you lie here flat,

With a donkey for friend, you must have a wife:

She pulls out your hair, but she brushes your hat.

Appearances make the best half of life.

IV

You nice little madam! you know you're nice.

I remember hearing a parson say
You're a plateful of vanity peppered with vice;

Yon chap at the gate thinks t' other way.
On his waistcoat you read both his head and his heart:

There's a whole week's wages there figured in gold!

Yes! when you turn round you may well give a start:

It's fun to a fellow who's getting old.

V

Now, that's a good craft, weaving waist-coats and flowers,

And selling of ribbons, and scenting of lard:
It gives you a house to get in from the showers,

And food when your appetite jockeys you hard.

¹Glass. ²Published in 1861.

You live a respectable man; but I ask
 If it's worth the trouble? You use your
 tools,
 And spend your time, and what's your task?
 Why, to make a slide for a couple of fools.

VI

You can't match the color o' these heath
 mounds,
 Nor better that peat-fire's agreeable smell.
 I'm clothed-like with natural sights and
 sounds;
 To myself I'm in tune: I hope you're as
 well.
 You jolly old cot! though you don't own
 coal:
 It's a generous pot that's boiled with peat.
 Let the Lord Mayor o' London roast oxen
 whole:
 His smoke, at least, don't smell so sweet.

VII

I'm not a low Radical, hating the laws,
 Who'd the aristocracy rebuke.
 I talk o' the Lord Mayor o' London because
 • I once was on intimate terms with his cook.
 I served him a turn,¹ and got pensioned on
 scraps,
 And, Lord, Sir! didn't I envy his place,
 Till Death knocked him down with the
 softest of taps,
 And I knew what was meant by a tallowy
 face!

VIII

On the contrary, I'm Conservative quite;
 There's beggars in Scripture 'mongst
 Gentiles and Jews:
 It's nonsense, trying to set things right,
 For if people will give, why, who'll refuse?
 That stopping old custom wakes my spleen:
 The poor and the rich both in giving agree:
 Your tight-fisted shopman's the Radical
 mean:
 There's nothing in common 'twixt him and
 me.

IX

He says I'm no use! but I won't reply.
 You're lucky not being of use to him!
 On week-days he's playing at Spider and Fly,
 And on Sundays he sings about Cherubim!

¹Did him a favor.

Nailing shillings to counters is his chief work:
 He nods now and then at the name on his
 door:
 But judge of us two, at a bow and a smirk,
 I think I'm his match: and I'm honest—
 that's more.

X

No use! well, I mayn't be. You ring a
 pig's snout,
 And then call the animal glutton! Now,
 he,
 Mr. Shopman, he's nought but a pipe and a
 spout
 Who won't let the goods o' this world pass
 free.
 This blazing blue weather all round the
 brown crop,
 He can't enjoy! all but cash he hates.
 He's only a snail that crawls under his shop;
 Though he has got the ear o' the magis-
 trates.

XI

Now, giving and taking's a proper exchange,
 Like question and answer: you're both
 content.
 But buying and selling seems always strange;
 You're hostile, and that's the thing that's
 meant.
 It's man against man—you're almost brutes;
 There's here no thanks, and there's there
 no pride.
 If Charity's Christian, don't blame my
 pursuits,
 I carry a touchstone by which you're tried.

XII

—"Take it," says she, "it's all I've got":
 I remember a girl in London streets:
 She stood by a coffee-stall, nice and hot,
 My belly was like a lamb that bleats.
 Says I to myself, as her shilling I seized,
 You haven't a character here, my dear!
 But for making a rascal like me so pleased,
 I'll give you one, in a better sphere!

XIII

And that's where it is—she made me feel
 I was a rascal: but people who scorn,
 And tell a poor patch-breech he isn't genteel,
 Why, they make him kick up—and he
 treads on a corn.

It isn't liking, it's curst ill-luck,
 Drives half of us into the begging-trade:
 If for taking to water you praise a duck,
 For taking to beer why a man upbraid?

XIV

The sermon's over: they're out of the porch,
 And it's time for me to move a leg;
 But in general people who come from church,
 And have called themselves sinners, hate
 chaps to beg.
 I'll wager they'll all of 'em dine to-day!
 I was easy half a minute ago.
 If that isn't pig that's baking away,
 May I perish!—we're never contented—
 heigho!

GRANDFATHER BRIDGEMAN¹

I

"HEIGH, boys!" cried Grandfather Bridgeman, "it's time before dinner to-day." He lifted the crumpled letter, and thumped a surprising "Hurrah!" Up jumped all the echoing young ones, but John, with the starch in his throat, Said, "Father, before we make noises, let's see the contents of the note." The old man glared at him harshly, and twinkling made answer: "Too bad! John Bridgeman, I'm always the whisky, and you are the water, my lad!"

II

But soon it was known through the house, and the house ran over for joy, That news, good news, great marvels, had come from the soldier boy; Young Tom,² the luckless scapegrace, offshoot of Methodist John; His grandfather's evening tale, whom the old man hailed as his son. And the old man's shout of pride was a shout of his victory, too; For he called his affection a method: the neighbors' opinions he knew.

¹Published in 1862.

²He was fighting in the Crimean War. In the battle (on 5 November, 1854) in which he won glory, the English and French defeated the Russians, who had made an unexpected attack on the English camp at Inkerman, near Sebastopol.

III

Meantime, from the morning table removing the stout breakfast cheer,
 The drink of the three generations, the milk, the tea, and the beer
 (Alone in its generous reading of pints stood the Grandfather's jug),
 The women for sight of the missive came pressing to coax and to hug.
 He scattered them quick, with a buss and a smack; thereupon he began
 Diversions with John's little Sarah: on Sunday, the naughty old man!

IV

Then messengers sped to the maltster, the auctioneer, miller, and all
 The seven sons of the farmer who housed in the range of his call.
 Likewise the married daughters, three plentiful ladies, prime cooks,
 Who bowed to him while they condemned, in meek hope to stand high in his books.
 "John's wife is a fool at a pudding," they said, and the light carts up hill
 Went merrily, flouting the Sabbath: for puddings well made mend a will.

V

The day was a van-bird of summer: the robin still piped, but the blue,
 As a warm and dreamy palace with voices of larks ringing through,
 Looked down as if wistfully eyeing the blossoms that fell from its lap:
 A day to sweeten the juices: a day to quicken the sap.
 All round the shadowy orchard sloped meadows in gold, and the dear
 Shy violets breathed their hearts out: the maiden breath of the year!

VI

Full time there was before dinner to bring fifteen of his blood,
 To sit at the old man's table: they found that the dinner was good.
 But who was she by the lilacs and pouring laburnums concealed,
 When under the blossoming apple the chair of the Grandfather wheeled?
 She heard one little child crying, "Dear brave Cousin Tom!" as it leapt;
 Then murmured she: "Let me spare them!" and passed round the walnuts, and wept.

VII

Yet not from sight had she slipped ere
 feminine eyes could detect
 The figure of Mary Charlworth. "It's just
 what we all might expect,"
 Was uttered: and: "Didn't I tell you?"
 Of Mary the rumor resounds,
 That she is now her own mistress, and mis-
 tress of five thousand pounds.
 'Twas she, they say, who cruelly sent young
 Tom to the war.
 Miss Mary, we thank you now! If you knew
 what we're thanking you for!

VIII

But, "Have her in: let her hear it," called
 Grandfather Bridgeman, elate,
 While Mary's black-gloved fingers hung
 trembling with flight on the gate.
 Despite the women's remonstrance, two
 little ones, lighter than deer,
 Were loosed, and Mary, imprisoned, her
 whole face white as a tear,
 Came forward with culprit footsteps. Her
 punishment was to commence:
 The pity in her pale visage they read in a
 different sense.

IX

"You perhaps may remember a fellow, Miss
 Charlworth, a sort of black sheep,"
 The old man turned his tongue to ironical
 utterance deep:
 "He came of a Methodist dad, so it wasn't
 his fault if he kicked.
 He earned a sad reputation, but Methodists
 are mortal strict.
 His name was Tom, and, dash me! but
 Bridgeman I think you might add:
 Whatever he was, bear in mind that he came
 of a Methodist dad."

X

This prelude dismally lengthened, till Mary,
 starting, exclaimed,
 "A letter, Sir, from your grandson?" "Tom
 Bridgeman that rascal is named,"
 The old man answered, and further, the
 words that sent Tom to the ranks
 Repeated as words of a person to whom they
 all owed mighty thanks.

But Mary never blushed: with her eyes on
 the letter, she sate,
 And twice interrupting him faltered, "The
 date, may I ask, Sir, the date?"

XI

"Why, that's what I never look at in a
 letter," the farmer replied:
 "Facts first! and now I'll be parson." The
 Bridgeman women descried
 A quiver on Mary's eyebrows. One turned,
 and while shifting her comb,
 Said low to a sister: "I'm certain she knows
 more than we about Tom.
 She wants him now he's a hero!" The same,
 resuming her place,
 Begged Mary to check them the moment she
 found it a tedious case.

XII

Then as a mastiff swallows the snarling
 noises of cats,
 The voice of the farmer opened. "'Three
 cheers, and off with your hats!'
 —That's Tom. 'We've beaten them, Daddy,
 and tough work it was, to be sure!
 A regular stand-up combat: eight hours
 smelling powder and gore.
 I entered it Sergeant-Major,'—and now he
 commands a salute,
 And carries the flag of old England! Heigh!
 see him lift foes on his foot!"

XIII

"—An officer! ay, Miss Charlworth, he is,
 or he is so to be;
 You'll own war isn't such humbug: and
 Glory means something, you see.
 'But don't say a word,' he continues, 'against
 the brave French any more.'
 —That stopped me: we'll now march to-
 gether. I couldn't read further before.
 That 'brave French' I couldn't stomach.
 He can't see their cunning to get
 Us Britons to fight their battles, while best
 half the winnings they net!"

XIV

The old man sneered, and read forward. It
 was of that desperate fight;—
 The Muscovite stole through the mist-
 wreaths that wrapped the chill Inker-
 mann height,

Where stood our silent outposts: old England was in them that day!
 O sharp worked his ruddy wrinkles, as if to the breath of the fray
 They moved! He sat bareheaded: his long hair over him slow
 Swung white as the silky bog-flowers in purple heath-hollows that grow.

XV

And louder at Tom's first person: acute and in thunder the "I"
 Invaded the ear with a whinny of triumph, that seemed to defy
 The hosts of the world. All heated, what wonder he little could brook
 To catch the sight of Mary's demure puritanical look?
 And still as he led the onslaught, his treacherous side-shots he sent
 At her who was fighting a battle as fierce, and who sat there unbent.

XVI

"We stood in line, and like hedgehogs the Russians rolled under us thick.
 They frightened me there."—He's no coward; for when, Miss, they came at the quick,
 The sight, he swears, was a breakfast.—"My stomach felt tight: in a glimpse
 I saw you snoring at home with the dear cuddled-up little imps.
 And then like the winter brickfields at midnight, hot fire lengthened out.
 Our fellows were just leashed bloodhounds: no heart of the lot faced about.

XVII

"And only that grumbler, Bob Harris, remarked that we stood one to ten:
 "Ye fool," says Mick Grady, "just tell 'em they know how to compliment men!"
 And I sang out your old words: "If the opposite side isn't God's,
 Heigh! after you've counted a dozen, the pluckiest lads have the odds."
 Ping-ping flew the enemy's pepper: the Colonel roared, Forward, and we
 Went at them. 'Twas first like a blanket: and then a long plunge in the sea.

XVIII

"Well, now about me and the Frenchman: it happened I can't tell you how:

And, Grandfather, hear, if you love me, and put aside prejudice now':
 He never says 'Grandfather'—Tom don't—save it's a serious thing.
 'Well, there were some pits for the rifles, just dug on our French-leaning wing:
 And backwards and forwards, and backwards we went, and at last I was vexed,
 And swore I would never surrender a foot when the Russians charged next.

XIX

"I know that life's worth keeping."—Ay, so it is, lad; so it is!—
 'But my life belongs to a woman.'—Does that mean Her Majesty, Miss?—
 'These Russians came lumping and grinning: they're fierce at it, though they are blocks.
 Our fellows were pretty well pumped, and looked sharp for the little French cocks.
 Lord, didn't we pray for their crowing! when over us, on the hill-top,
 Behold the first line of them skipping, like kangaroos seen on the hop.

XX

"That sent me into a passion, to think of them spying our flight!"
 Heigh, Tom! you've Bridgeman blood, boy! And, "Face them!" I shouted: "All right;
 Sure, Sergeant, we'll take their shot dacent, like gentlemen," Grady replied.
 A ball in his mouth, and the noble old Irishman dropped by my side.
 Then there was just an instant to save myself, when a short wheeze
 Of bloody lungs under the smoke, and a red-coat crawled up on his knees.

XXI

"'Twas Ensign Baynes of our parish.'—Ah, ah, Miss Charlworth, the one
 Our Tom fought for a young lady? Come, now we've got into the fun!—
 'I shouldered him: he primed his pistol, and I trailed my musket, prepared.'
 Why, that's a fine pick-a-back for ye, to make twenty Russians look scared!
 'They came—never mind how many: we couldn't have run very well,
 We fought back to back: "face to face, our last time!" he said, smiling, and fell.

XXII

"Then I strove wild for his body: the
 beggars saw glittering rings,
 Which I vowed to send to his mother. I got
 some hard knocks and sharp stings,
 But felt them no more than angel, or devil,
 except in the wind.
 I know that I swore at a Russian for showing
 his teeth, and he grinned
 The harder: quick, as from heaven, a man
 on a horse rode between,
 And fired, and swung his bright saber: I
 can't write you more of the scene.

XXIII

"But half in his arms, and half at his
 stirrup, he bore me right forth,
 And pitched me among my old comrades:
 before I could tell south from north,
 He caught my hand up, and kissed it!
 Don't ever let any man speak
 A word against Frenchmen, I hear him! I
 can't find his name, though I seek.
 But French, and a General, surely he was,
 and, God bless him! through him
 I've learned to love a whole nation." The
 ancient man paused, winking dim.

XXIV

A curious look, half woeful, was seen on his
 face as he turned
 His eyes upon each of his children, like one
 who but faintly discerned
 His old self in an old mirror. Then gather-
 ing sense in his fist,
 He sounded it hard on his knee-cap. "Your
 hand, Tom, the French fellow kissed!
 He kissed my boy's old pounder! I say he's
 a gentleman!" Straight
 The letter he tossed to one daughter; bade
 her the remainder relate.

XXV

Tom properly stated his praises in facts, but
 the lady preferred
 To deck the narration with brackets, and
 drop her additional word.
 What nobler Christian natures these women
 could boast, who, 'twas known,
 Once spat at the name of their nephew, and
 now made his praises their own!
 The letter at last was finished, the hearers
 breathed freely, and sign

Was given, "Tom's health!"—Quoth the
 farmer: "Eh, Miss? are you weak in
 the spine?"

XXVI

For Mary had sunk, and her body was
 shaking, as if in a fit.
 Tom's letter she held, and her thumb-nail
 the month when the letter was writ
 Fast-dinted, while she hung sobbing: "O,
 see, Sir, the letter is old!
 O, do not be too happy!"—"If I understand
 you, I'm bowled!"
 Said Grandfather Bridgeman, "and down go
 my wickets!—not happy! when here,
 Here's Tom like to marry his General's
 daughter—or widow—I'll swear!

XXVII

"I wager he knows how to strut, too! It's
 all on the cards that the Queen
 Will ask him to Buckingham Palace, to say
 what he's done and he's seen.
 Victoria's fond of her soldiers: and she's
 got a nose for a fight.
 If Tom tells a cleverish story—there is such a
 thing as a knight!
 And don't he look roguish and handsome!—
 To see a girl sniveling there—
 By George, Miss, it's clear that you're
 jealous!"—"I love him!" she answered
 his stare.

XXVIII

"Yes! now!" breathed the voice of a
 woman.—"Ah! now!" quivered low
 the reply.
 "And 'now' 's just a bit too late, so it's nouse
 your piping your eye,"
 The farmer added bluffly: "Old Lawyer
 Charlworth was rich;
 You followed his instructions in kicking Tom
 into the ditch.
 If you're such a dutiful daughter, that
 doesn't prove Tom is a fool.
 Forgive and forget's my motto! and here's
 my grog growing cool!"

XXIX

"But, Sir," Mary faintly repeated: "for
 four long weeks I have failed
 To come and cast on you my burden; such
 grief for you always prevailed!

My heart has so bled for you!" The old man burst on her speech:

"You've chosen a likely time, Miss! a pretty occasion to preach!"

And was it not outrageous, that now, of all times, one should come

With incomprehensible pity! Far better had Mary been dumb.

xxx

But when again she stammered in this bewildering way,

The farmer no longer could bear it, and begged her to go, or to stay,

But not to be whimpering nonsense at such a time. Pricked by a goad,

"'Twas you who sent him to glory:—you've come here to reap what you sowed.

Is that it?" he asked; and the silence the elders preserved plainly said,

On Mary's heaving bosom this begging-petition was read.

xxxix

And that it was scarcely a bargain that she who had driven him wild

Should share now the fruits of his valor, the women expressed, as they smiled.

The family pride of the Bridgemans was comforted; still, with contempt,

They looked on a moneyed damsel of modesty quite so exempt.

"C give me force to tell them!" cried Mary, and even as she spoke,

A shout and a hush of the children: a vision on all of them broke.

xxxix

Wheeled, pale, in a chair, and shattered, the wreck of their hero was seen;

The ghost of Tom drawn slow o'er the orchard's shadowy green.

Could this be the martial darling they joyed in a moment ago?

"He knows it?" to Mary Tom murmured, and closed his weak lids at her "No."

"Beloved!" she said, falling by him, "I have been a coward: I thought

You lay in the foreign country, and some strange good might be wrought.

xxxix

"Each day I have come to tell him, and failed, with my hand on the gate.

I bore the dreadful knowledge, and crushed my heart with its weight.

The letter brought by your comrade—he has but just read it aloud!

It only reached him this morning!" Her head on his shoulder she bowed.

Then Tom with pity's tenderest lordliness patted her arm,

And eyed the old white-head fondly, with something of doubt and alarm.

xxxix

Oh, take to your fancy a sculptor whose fresh marble offspring appears

Before him, shiningly perfect, the laurel-crowned issue of years:

Is heaven offended? for lightning behold from its bosom escape,

And those are mocking fragments that made the harmonious shape!

He cannot love the ruins, till, feeling that ruins alone

Are left, he loves them threefold. So passed the old grandfather's moan.

xxxix

John's text for a sermon on Slaughter he heard, and he did not protest.

All rigid as April snowdrifts, he stood, hard and feeble; his chest

Just showing the swell of the fire as it melted him. Smiting a rib,

"Heigh! what have we been about, Tom! Was this all a terrible fib?"

He cried, and the letter forth-trembled. Tom told what the cannon had done.

Few present but ached to see falling those aged tears on his heart's son!

xxxix

Up lanes of the quiet village, and where the mill-waters rush red

Through browning summer meadows to catch the sun's crimsoning head,

You meet an old man and a maiden who has the soft ways of a wife

With one whom they wheel, alternate; whose delicate flush of new life

Is prized like the early primrose. Then shake his right hand, in the chair—

The old man fails never to tell you: "You've got the French General's there!"

MODERN LOVE¹

I

By THIS he knew she wept with waking
 eyes:
 That, at his hand's light quiver by her
 head,
 The strange low sobs that shook their
 common bed
 Were called into her with a sharp surprise,
 And strangled mute, like little gaping snakes,
 Dreadfully venomous to him. She lay
 Stone-still, and the long darkness flowed
 away
 With muffled pulses. Then, as midnight
 makes
 Her giant heart of Memory and Tears
 Drink the pale drug of silence, and so beat
 Sleep's heavy measure, they from head to
 feet
 Were moveless, looking through their dead
 black years,
 By vain regret scrawled over the blank wall.
 Like sculptured effigies they might be seen
 Upon their marriage-tomb, the sword be-
 tween;
 Each wishing for the sword that severs all.

IV

All other joys of life he strove to warm,
 And magnify, and catch them to his lip:
 But they had suffered shipwreck with the
 ship,
 And gazed upon him sallow from the storm.
 Or if Delusion came, 'twas but to show
 The coming minute mock the one that
 went.
 Cold as a mountain in its star-pitched
 tent,
 Stood high Philosophy, less friend than
 foe:
 Whom self-caged Passion, from its prison-
 bars,
 Is always watching with a wondering hate.
 Not till the fire is dying in the grate,
 Look we for any kinship with the stars.
 Oh, wisdom never comes when it is gold,
 And the great price we pay for it full worth:
 We have it only when we are half earth.
 Little avails that coinage to the old!

¹Published in 1862. The poem tells in fifty sections the tragic story of a husband and wife who loved each other once, but whose love has long been fading. "He" is the husband, "she" the wife.

XIII²

"I play for Seasons; not Eternities!"
 Says Nature, laughing on her way. "So
 must
 All those whose stake is nothing more than
 dust!"
 And lo, she wins, and of her harmonies
 She is full sure! Upon her dying rose
 She drops a look of fondness, and goes by,
 Scarce any retrospection in her eye;
 For she the laws of growth most deeply
 knows,
 Whose hands bear, here, a seed-bag—there,
 an urn.
 Pledged she herself to aught, 'twould mark
 her end!
 This lesson of our only visible friend
 Can we not teach our foolish hearts to learn?
 Yes! yes!—but, oh, our human rose is fair
 Surpassingly! Lose calmly Love's great
 bliss,
 When the renewed for ever of a kiss
 Whirls life within the shower of loosened hair!

XVII

At dinner, she is hostess, I³ am host.
 Went the feast ever cheerfuller? She keeps
 The Topic over intellectual deeps
 In buoyancy afloat. They see no ghost.
 With sparkling surface-eyes we ply the ball:
 It is in truth a most contagious game:
 HIDING THE SKELETON, shall be its name.
 Such play as this the devils might appal!
 But here's the greater wonder; in that we,
 Enamored of an acting nought can tire,
 Each other, like true hypocrites, admire;
 Warm-lighted looks, Love's ephemeridæ,
 Shoot gaily o'er the dishes and the wine.
 We waken envy of our happy lot.
 Fast, sweet, and golden, shows the marriage-
 knot.
 Dear guests, you now have seen Love's
 corpse-light shine.

XIX

No state is enviable. To the luck alone
 Of some few favored men I³ would put claim.
 I bleed, but her who wounds I will not blame.
 Have I not felt her heart as 'twere my own

²Here the husband speaks, saying that it is the law of Nature—and trying to persuade himself that it should be also the law for men—that everything should have its season and then pass away.

³The husband.

Beat through me? could I hurt her?
heaven and hell!

But I could hurt her cruelly! Can I let
My Love's old time-piecé to another set,
Swear it can't stop, and must for ever swell?
Sure, that's one way Love drifts into the
mart

Where goat-legged buyers throng. I see not
plain:—

My meaning is, it must not be again.

Great God! the maddest gambler throws
his heart.

If any state be enviable on earth,
'Tis yon born idiot's who, as days go by,
Still rubs his hands before him, like a fly,
In a queer sort of meditative mirth.

XXIX

Am I failing? For no longer can I cast
A glory round about this head of gold.¹
Glory she wears, but springing from the mold;
Not like the consecration of the Past!
Is my soul beggared? Something more than
earth

I cry for still: I cannot be at peace

In having Love upon a mortal lease.

I cannot take the woman at her worth!

Where is the ancient wealth wherewith I
clothed

Our human nakedness, and could endow

With spiritual splendor a white brow

That else had grinned at me the fact I
loathed?

A kiss is but a kiss now! and no wave
Of a great flood that whirls me to the sea.

But, as you will! we'll sit contentedly,
And eat our pot of honey on the grave.

XXX

What are we first? First, animals; and next
Intelligences at a leap; on whom
Pale lies the distant shadow of the tomb,
And all that draweth on the tomb for text.
Into which state comes Love, the crowning
sun:

Beneath whose light the shadow loses form.

We are the lords of life, and life is warm.

Intelligence and instinct now are one.

But nature says: "My children most they
seem

¹The husband has sought distraction from his wretchedness by philandering with a witty, golden-haired lady but, as this and the following section show, has found small satisfaction in it.

When they least know me: therefore I decree
That they shall suffer." Swift doth young
Love flee,

And we stand wakened, shivering from our
dream.

Then if we study Nature we are wise.

Thus do the few who live but with the day:

The scientific animals are they.—

Lady,² this is my sonnet to your eyes.

XLIII³

Mark where the pressing wind shoots javelin-
like

Its skeleton shadow on the broad-backed
wave!

Here is a fitting spot to dig Love's grave;
Here where the ponderous breakers plunge
and strike,

And dart their hissing tongues high up the
sand:

In hearing of the ocean, and in sight
Of those ribbed wind-streaks running into
white.

If I the death of Love had deeply planned,
I never could have made it half so sure,
As by the unblest kisses which upbraid
The full-waked sense; or failing that, de-
grade!

'Tis morning: but no morning can restore

What we have forfeited. I see no sin:

The wrong is mixed. In tragic life, God wot,

No villain need be! Passions spin the plot:

We are betrayed by what is false within.

XLVIII⁴

Their sense is with their senses all mixed in,
Destroyed by subtleties these women are!

More brain, O Lord, more brain! or we shall
mar

Utterly this fair garden we might win.

²The golden-haired lady. See preceding note.

³Husband and wife have agreed to forgive each other and to renew their love, but this they find impossible, and their kisses serve only to show them the death of love.

⁴Even after the discovery told in Section XLIII, the husband hoped that a real explanation and understanding between the two would bring about a settled, tolerable relationship. His wife, however, thinking that he loved the "Lady" and only pitied her, quixotically departed from him in order to leave him free to return to the "Lady." In Section XLIX he follows his wife and finds her by the sea. She dreams for a moment that their old love may re-awaken but, knowing in her heart that it cannot be, she commits suicide.

Behold! I looked for peace, and thought it near.

Our inmost hearts had opened, each to each.
We drank the pure daylight of honest speech.

Alas! that was the fatal draught, I fear.

For when of my lost Lady came the word,
This woman, O this agony of flesh!

Jealous devotion bade her break the mesh,
That I might seek that other like a bird.

I do adore the nobleness! despise
The act! She has gone forth, I know not

where.

Will the hard world my sentence of her share?

I feel the truth; so let the world surmise.

L¹

Thus piteously Love closed what he begat:
The union of this ever-diverse pair!

These two were rapid falcons in a snare,
Condemned to do the fitting of the bat.

Lovers beneath the singing sky of May,
They wandered once; clear as the dew on

flowers:

But they fed not on the advancing hours:
Their hearts held cravings for the buried day.

Then each applied to each that fatal knife,
Deep questioning, which probes to endless

dole.

Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul
When hot for certainties in this our life!—

In tragic hints here see what evermore
Moves dark as yonder midnight ocean's

force,

Thundering like ramping hosts of warrior
horse,

To throw that faint thin line upon the shore!

THE SPIRIT OF SHAKESPEARE²

THY greatest knew thee, Mother Earth;
unsoured

He knew thy sons. He probed from hell to
hell

Of human passions, but of love deflowered
His wisdom was not, for he knew thee well.

Thence came the honeyed corner at his lips,
The conquering smile wherein his spirit sails

Calm as the God who the white sea-wave
whips.³

¹In this section the poet speaks in his own person.

²Published in 1883.

³Neptune.

Yet full of speech and intershifting tales,
Close mirrors of us: thence had he the laugh
We feel is thine: broad as ten thousand
beeves

At pasture! thence thy songs, that winnow
chaff

From grain, bid sick Philosophy's last leaves
Whirl, if they have no response—they

enforced

To fatten Earth when from her soul divorced.

CONTINUED

How smiles he at a generation ranked
In gloomy noddings over life! They pass.
Not he to feed upon a breast unthanked,
Or eye a beauteous face in a cracked glass.
But he can spy that little twist of brain
Which moved some weighty leader of the
blind,

Unwitting 'twas the goad of personal pain,
To view in curst eclipse our Mother's mind,

And show us of some rigid harridan
The wretched bondmen till the end of time.

O lived the Master now to paint us Man,
That little twist of brain would ring a chime

Of whence it came and what it caused, to
start

Thunders of laughter, clearing air and heart.

EARTH'S SECRET⁴

Nor solitarily in fields we find

Earth's secret open, though one page is there;

Her plainest, such as children spell, and
share

With bird and beast; raised letters for the
blind.

Not where the troubled passions toss the
mind,

In turbid cities, can the key be bare.

It hangs for those who hither thither fare,
Close interthreading nature with our kind.

They, hearing History speak, of what men
were,

And have become, are wise. The gain is
great

In vision and solidity; it lives.

Yet at a thought of life apart from her,
Solidity and vision lose their state,

For Earth, that gives the milk, the spirit
gives.

⁴This and the following sonnet were published in 1883.

THE DISCIPLINE OF WISDOM

RICH labor is the struggle to be wise,
While we make sure the struggle cannot cease.
Else better were it in some bower of peace
Slothful to swing, contending with the flies.
You point at Wisdom fixed on lofty skies,
As mid barbarian hordes a sculptured
Greece:

She falls. To live and shine, she grows her
fleece,

Is shorn, and rubs with follies and with lies.
So following her, your hewing may attain
The right to speak unto the mute, and shun
That sly temptation of the illumined brain,
Deliveries oracular, self-spun.

Who sweats not with the flock will seek in
vain

To shed the words which are ripe fruit of sun.

THE LARK ASCENDING¹

HE RISES and begins to round,
He drops the silver chain of sound,
Of many links without a break,
In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake,
All interwoven and spreading wide,
Like water-dimples down a tide
Where ripple ripple overcurls
And eddy into eddy whirls;
A press of hurried notes that run
So fleet they scarce are more than one,
Yet changingly the trills repeat
And linger ringing while they fleet,
Sweet to the quick o' the ear, and dear
To her beyond the handmaid ear,
Who sits beside our inner springs,
Too often dry for this he brings,
Which seems the very jet of earth
At sight of sun, her music's mirth,
As up he wings the spiral stair,
A song of light, and pierces air
With fountain ardor, fountain play,
To reach the shining tops of day,
And drink in everything discerned
An ecstasy to music turned,
Impelled by what his happy bill
Disperses; drinking, showering still,
Unthinking save that he may give
His voice the outlet, there to live
Renewed in endless notes of glee,
So thirsty of his voice is he,

For all to hear and all to know
That he is joy, awake, aglow,
The tumult of the heart to hear
Through pureness filtered crystal-clear,
And know the pleasure sprinkled bright
By simple singing of delight,
Shrill, irreflective, unrestrained,
Rapt, ringing, on the jet sustained
Without a break, without a fall,
Sweet-silvery, sheer lyrical,
Perennial, quavering up the chord
Like myriad dews of sunny sward
That trembling into fullness shine,
And sparkle dropping argentine;²
Such wooing as the ear receives
From zephyr caught in choric leaves
Of aspens when their chattering net
Is flushed to white with shivers wet;
And such the water-spirit's chime
On mountain heights in morning's prime,
Too freshly sweet to seem excess,
Too animate to need a stress;
But wider over many heads
The starry voice ascending spreads,
Awakening, as it waxes thin,
The best in us to him akin;
And every face to watch him raised
Puts on the light of children praised,
So rich our human pleasure ripens
When sweetness on sincereness pipes,
Though nought be promised from the seas,
But only a soft-ruffling breeze
Sweep glittering on a still content,
Serenity in ravishment.

For singing till his heaven fills,
'Tis love of earth that he instills,
And ever winging up and up,
Our valley is his golden cup,
And he the wine which overflows
To lift us with him as he goes:
The woods and brooks, the sheep and kine,
He is, the hills, the human line,
The meadows green, the fallows brown,
The dreams of labor in the town;
He sings the sap, the quickened veins;
The wedding song of sun and rains
He is, the dance of children, thanks
Of sowers, shout of primrose-banks,
And eye of violets while they breathe;
All these the circling song will wreath,
And you shall hear the herb and tree,
The better heart of men shall see,

¹Published in 1881.

²Silvery substance.

Shall feel celestially, as long
As you crave nothing save the song.

Was never voice of ours could say
Our inmost in the sweetest way,
Like yonder voice aloft, and link
All hearers in the song they drink.
Our wisdom speaks from failing blood,
Our passion is too full in flood,
We want the key of his wild note
Of truthful in a tuneful throat,
The song seraphically free
Of taint of personality,
So pure that it salutes the suns,
The voice of one for millions,
In whom the millions rejoice
For giving their one spirit voice.

Yet men have we, whom we revere,
Now names, and men still housing here,
Whose lives, by many a battle-dint
Defaced, and grinding wheels on flint,
Yield substance, though they sing not, sweet
For song our highest heaven to greet:
Whom heavenly singing gives us new,
Enspheres them brilliant in our blue,
From firmest base to farthest leap,
Because their love of Earth is deep,
And they are warriors in accord
With life to serve, and pass reward,
So touching purest and so heard
In the brain's reflex of yon bird:
Wherefore their soul in me, or mine,
Through self-forgetfulness divine,
In them, that song aloft maintains,
To fill the sky and thrill the plains
With showerings drawn from human stores,
As he to silence nearer soars,
Extends the world at wings and dome,
More spacious making more our home,
Till lost on his aerial rings
In light, and then the fancy sings.

LOVE IN THE VALLEY¹

UNDER yonder beech-tree single on the green-
sward,
Couched with her arms behind her golden
head,
Knees and tresses folded to slip and ripple
idly,
Lies my young love sleeping in the shade.

¹Published in 1851, but rewritten and enlarged before
publication in 1878.

Had I the heart to slide an arm beneath her,
Press her parting lips as her waist I gather
slow,
Waking in amazement she could not but
embrace me:
Then would she hold me and never let me
go?

* * *

Shy as the squirrel and wayward as the
swallow,
Swift as the swallow along the river's light
Circling the surface to meet his mirrored
winglets,
Fleeter she seems in her stay than in her
flight.
Shy as the squirrel that leaps among the pine-
tops,
Wayward as the swallow overhead at set
of sun,
Shewhom I love is hard to catch and conquer,
Hard, but O the glory of the winning were
she won!

* * *

When her mother tends her before the
laughing mirror,
Tying up her laces, looping up her hair,
Often she thinks, were this wild thing wedded,
More love should I have, and much less
care.
When her mother tends her before the lighted
mirror,
Loosening her laces, combing down her
curls,
Often she thinks, were this wild thing wedded,
I should miss but one for many boys and
girls.

* * *

Heartless she is as the shadow in the meadows
Flying to the hills on a blue and breezy
noon.
No, she is athirst and drinking up her wonder:
Earth to her is young as the slip of the new
moon.
Deals she an unkindness, 'tis but her rapid
measure,
Even as in a dance; and her smile can heal
no less:
Like the swinging May-cloud that pelts the
flowers with hailstones
Off a sunny border, she was made to bruise
and bless.

Lovely are the curves of the white owl sweep-
ing

Wavy in the dusk lit by one large star.

Lone on the fir-branch, his rattle-note un-
varied,

Brooding o'er the gloom, spins the brown
eve-jar.¹

Darker grows the valley, more and more
forgetting:

So were it with me if forgetting could be
willed.

Tell the grassy hollow that holds the bub-
bling well-spring,

Tell it to forget the source that keeps it filled.

* * *

Stepping down the hill with her fair com-
panions,

Arm in arm, all against the raying West,
Boldly she sings, to the merry tune she
marches,

Brave in her shape, and sweeter un-
possessed.

Sweeter, for she is what my heart first awak-
ing

Whispered the world was; morning light
is she.

Love that so desires would fain keep her
changeless;

Fain would fling the net, and fain have her
free.

* * *

Happy happy time, when the white star
hovers

Low over dim fields fresh with bloomy dew,
Near the face of dawn, that draws athwart
the darkness,

Threading it with color, like yewberries the
yew.

Thicker crowd the shades as the grave East
deepens

Glowing, and with crimson a long cloud
swells.

Maiden still the morn is; and strange she is,
and secret;

Strange her eyes; her cheeks are cold as
cold sea-shells.

* * *

Sunrays, leaning on our southern hills and
lighting

Wild cloud-mountains that drag the hills
along,

Oft ends the day of your shifting brilliant
laughter

Chill as a dull face frowning on a song.

Ay, but shows the South-West a ripple-
feathered bosom

Blown to silver while the clouds are shaken
and ascend

Scaling the mid-heavens as they stream,
there comes a sunset

Rich, deep like love in beauty without end.

* * *

When at dawn she sighs, and like an infant
to the window

Turns grave eyes craving light, released
from dreams,

Beautiful she looks, like a white water-lily
Bursting out of bud in havens of the
streams.

When from bed she rises clothed from neck
to ankle

In her long nightgown sweet as boughs of
May,

Beautiful she looks, like a tall garden lily
Pure from the night, and splendid for the
day.

* * *

Mother of the dews, dark eye-lashed twi-
light,

Low-lidded twilight, o'er the valley's brim,
Rounding on thy breast sings the dew-
delighted skylark,

Clear as though the dewdrops had their
voice in him.

Hidden where the rose-flush drinks the ray-
less planet,

Fountain-full he pours the spraying
fountain-showers.

Let me hear her laughter, I would have her
ever

Cool as dew in twilight, the lark above the
flowers.

* * *

All the girls are out with their baskets for the
primrose;

Up lanes, woods through, they troop in
joyful bands.

My sweet leads: she knows not why, but
now she loiters,

Eyes the bent anemones, and hangs her
hands.

¹Night-jar, the European species of goatsucker.

Such a look will tell that the violets are
 peeping,
 Coming the rose: and unaware a cry
 Springs in her bosom for odors and for color,
 Covert and the nightingale; she knows not
 why.

* * *

Kerchiefed head and chin she darts between
 her tulips,
 Streaming like a willow gray in arrowy
 rain:
 Some bend beaten cheek to gravel, and their
 angel
 She will be; she lifts them, and on she
 speeds again.
 Black the driving raincloud breasts the iron
 gateway:
 She is forth to cheer a neighbor lacking
 mirth.
 So when sky and grass met rolling dumb for
 thunder
 Saw I once a white dove, sole light of earth.

* * *

Prim little scholars are the flowers of her
 garden,
 Trained to stand in rows, and asking if
 they please.
 I might love them well but for loving more
 the wild ones:
 O my wild ones! they tell me more than
 these.
 You, my wild one, you tell of honeyed field-
 rose,
 Violet, blushing englantine in life; and
 even as they,
 They by the wayside are earnest of your
 goodness,
 You are of life's, on the banks that line the
 way.

* * *

Peering at her chamber the white crowns the
 red rose,
 Jasmine winds the porch with stars two
 and three.
 Parted is the window; she sleeps; the starry
 jasmine
 Breathes a falling breath that carries
 thoughts of me.
 Sweeter unpossessed, have I said of her my
 sweetest?
 Not while she sleeps: while she sleeps the
 jasmine breathes,

Luring her to love; she sleeps; the starry
 jasmine
 Bears me to her pillow under white rose-
 wreaths.

* * *

Yellow with birdfoot-trefoil are the grass-
 glades;
 Yellow with cinquefoil of the dew-gray leaf;
 Yellow with stonecrop; the moss-mounds are
 yellow;
 Blue-necked the wheat sways, yellowing to
 the sheaf.
 Green-yellow bursts from the copse the
 laughing yaffle;¹
 Sharp as a sickle is the edge of shade and
 shine:
 Earth in her heart laughs looking at the
 heavens,
 Thinking of the harvest: I look and think
 of mine.

* * *

This I may know: her dressing and un-
 dressing
 Such a change of light shows as when the
 skies in sport
 Shift from cloud to moonlight; or edging
 over thunder
 Slips a ray of sun; or sweeping into port
 White sails furl; or on the ocean borders
 White sails lean along the waves leaping
 green.
 Visions of her shower before me, but from
 eyesight
 Guarded she would be like the sun were she
 seen.

* * *

Front door and back of the mossed old farm-
 house
 Open with the morn, and in a breezy link
 Freshly sparkles garden to stripe-shadowed
 orchard,
 Green across a rill where on sand the min-
 nows wink.
 Busy in the grass the early sun of summer
 Swarms, and the blackbird's mellow fluting
 notes
 Call my darling up with round and roguish
 challenge:
 Quaintest, richest carol of all the singing
 throats!

¹The green woodpecker.

Cool was the woodside; cool as her white dairy

Keeping sweet the cream-pan; and there the boys from school,

Cricketing below, rushed brown and red with sunshine;

O the dark translucence of the deep-eyed cool!

Spying from the farm, herself she fetched a pitcher

Full of milk, and tilted for each in turn the beak.

Then a little fellow, mouth up and on tiptoe, Said, "I will kiss you": she laughed and leaned her cheek.

* * *

Doves of the fir-wood walling high our red roof Through the long noon coo, crooning through the coo.

Loose droop the leaves, and down the sleepy roadway

Sometimes pipes a chaffinch; loose droops the blue.

Cows flap a slow tail knee-deep in the river, Breathless, given up to sun and gnat and fly.

Nowhere is she seen; and if I see her nowhere,

Lightning may come, straight rains and tiger sky.

* * *

O the golden sheaf, the rustling treasure-armful!

O the nutbrown tresses nodding interlaced!

O the treasure-tresses one another over Nodding! O the girdle slack about the waist!

Slain are the poppies that shot their random scarlet

Quick amid the wheatears: wound about the waist,

Gathered, see these brides of Earth one blush of ripeness!

O the nutbrown tresses nodding interlaced!

* * *

Large and smoky red the sun's cold disk drops,

Clipped by naked hills, on violet shaded snow:

Eastward large and still lights up a bower of moonrise,

Whence at her leisure steps the moon aglow.

Nightlong on black print-branches our beech-tree

Gazes in this whiteness: nightlong could I. Here may life on death or death on life be painted.

Let me clasp her soul to know she cannot die!

* * *

Gossips count her faults; they scour a narrow chamber

Where there is no window, read not heaven or her.

"When she was tiny," one aged woman quavers,

Plucks at my heart and leads me by the ear.

Faults she had once as she learned to run and tumbled:

Faults of feature some see, beauty not complete.

Yet, good gossips, beauty that makes holy Earth and air, may have faults from head to feet.

* * *

Hither she comes; she comes to me; she lingers,

Deepens her brown eyebrows, while in new surprise

High rise the lashes in wonder of a stranger;

Yet am I the light and living of her eyes.

Something friends have told her fills her heart to brimming,

Nets her in her blushes, and wounds her, and tames.—

Sure of her haven, O like a dove alighting, Arms up, she dropped: our souls were in our names.

* * *

Soon will she lie like a white-frost sunrise.

Yellow oats and brown wheat, barley pale as rye,

Long since your sheaves have yielded to the thresher,

Felt the girdle loosened, seen the tresses fly.

Soon will she lie like a blood-red sunset.

Swift with the to-morrow, green-winged Spring!

Sing from the South-West, bring her back the truants,

Nightingale and swallow, song and dipping wing.

Soft new beech-leaves, up to beamy April
 Spreading bough on bough a primrose
 mountain, you,
 Lucid in the moon, raise lilies to the skyfields,
 Youngest green transfused in silver shining
 through:
 Fairer than the lily, than the wild white
 cherry:
 Fair as in image my seraph love appears
 Borne to me by dreams when dawn is at my
 eyelids:
 Fair as in the flesh she swims to me on
 tears.

* * *

Could I find a place to be alone with heaven,
 I would speak my heart out: heaven is my
 need.
 Every woodland tree is flushing like the dog-
 wood,
 Flashing like the whitebeam, swaying like
 the reed.
 Flushing like the dogwood crimson in
 October;
 Streaming like the flag-reed South-West
 blown;
 Flashing as in gusts the sudden-lighted
 whitebeam:
 All seem to know what is for heaven alone.

HARD WEATHER¹

BURSTS from a rending East in flaws
 The young green leaflet's harrier, sworn
 To strew the garden, strip the shaws,²
 And show our Spring with banner torn.
 Was ever such a virago morn?
 The wind has teeth, the wind has claws.
 All the wind's wolves through woods are loose,
 The wild wind's falconry aloft.
 Shrill underfoot the grassblade shrews,
 At gallop, clumped, and down the croft
 Bestrid by shadows, beaten, tossed;
 It seems a scythe, it seems a rod.
 The howl is up at the howl's accost;
 The shivers greet and the shivers nod.

Is the land ship? we are rolled, we drive
 Tritonly, cleaving hiss and hum;
 Whirl with the dead, or mount or dive,
 Or down in dregs, or on in scum.

¹This and the two following poems were published in
 1888.

²Woods.

And drums the distant, pipes the near,
 And vale and hill are gray in gray,
 As when the surge is crumbling sheer,
 And sea-mews wing the haze of spray.
 Clouds—are they bony witches?—swarms,
 Darting swift on the robber's flight,
 Hurry an infant sky in arms:
 It peeps, it becks; 'tis day, 'tis night.
 Black while over the loop of blue
 The swathe is closed, like shroud on corse.
 Lo, as if swift the Furies flew,
 The Fates at heel at a cry to horse!

Interpret me the savage whirr:
 And is it Nature scourged, or she,
 Her offspring's executioner,
 Reducing land to barren sea?
 But is there meaning in a day
 When this fierce angel of the air,
 Intent to throw, and haply slay,
 Can for what breath of life we bear
 Exact the wrestle? Call to mind
 The many meanings glistening up
 When Nature, to her nurslings kind,
 Hands them the fruitage and the cup!
 And seek we rich significance
 Not elsewhere than with those tides
 Of pleasure on the sunned expanse,
 Whose flow deludes, whose ebb derides?

Look in the face of men who fare
 Lock-mouthed, a match in lungs and thews
 For this fierce angel of the air,
 To twist with him and take his bruise.
 That is the face beloved of old
 Of Earth, young mother of her brood:
 Nor broken for us shows the mold
 When muscle is in mind renewed:
 Though farther from her nature rude,
 Yet nearer to her spirit's hold:
 And though of gentler mood serene,
 Still forceful of her fountain-jet.
 So shall her blows be shrewdly met,
 Be luminously read the scene
 Where Life is at her grindstone set,
 That she may give us edging keen,
 String us for battle, till as play
 The common strokes of fortune shower.
 Such meaning in a dagger-day
 Our wits may clasp to wax in power.
 Yea, feel us warmer at her breast,
 By spin of blood in lusty drill,
 Than when her honeyed hands caressed,
 And Pleasure, sapping, seemed to fill.

Behold the life at ease; it drifts.
 The sharpened life commands its course.
 She winnows, winnows roughly; sifts,
 To dip her chosen in her source:
 Contention is the vital force,
 Whence pluck they brain, her prize of gifts,
 Sky of the senses! on which height,
 Not disconnected, yet released,
 They see how spirit comes to light,
 Through conquest of the inner beast,
 Which Measure tames to movement sane,
 In harmony with what is fair.
 Never is Earth misread by brain:
 That is the welling of her, there
 The mirror: with one step beyond,
 For likewise is it voice; and more,
 Benignest kinship bids respond,
 When wail the weak, and them restore
 Whom days as fell as this may rive,
 While Earth sits ebon in her gloom,
 Us atomies of life alive
 Unheeding, bent on life to come.
 Her children of the laboring brain,
 These are the champions of the race,
 True parents, and the sole humane,
 With understanding for their base.
 Earth yields the milk, but all her mind
 Is vowed to thresh for stouter stock.
 Her passion for old giantkind,
 That scaled the mount, uphurled the rock,
 Devolves on them who read aright
 Her meaning and devoutly serve;
 Nor in her starlessness of night
 Peruse her with the craven nerve:
 But even as she from grass to corn,
 To eagle high from grubbing mole,
 Prove in strong brain her noblest born,
 The station for the flight of soul.

EARTH AND A WEDDED WOMAN

I

THE shepherd, with his eye on hazy South,
 Has told of rain upon the fall of day.
 'But promise is there none for Susan's drouth,
 That he will come, who keeps in dry delay.
 The freshest of the village three years gone,
 She hangs as the white field-rose hangs short-lived;

And she and Earth are one
 In withering unrevived.

Rain! O the glad refresher of the grain!
 And welcome waterspouts, had we sweet rain!

II

Ah, what is Marriage, says each pouting maid,
 When she who wedded with the soldier hides
 At home as good as widowed in the shade,
 A lighthouse to the girls that would be brides:
 Nor dares to give a lad an ogle, nor
 To dream of dancing, but must hang and moan,

Her husband in the war,
 And she to lie alone.

Rain! O the glad refresher of the grain!
 And welcome waterspouts, had we sweet rain!

III

They have not known; they are not in the stream;

Light as the flying seed-ball is their play,
 The silly maids! and happy souls they seem;
 Yet Grief would not change fates with such as they.

They have not struck the roots which meet the fires

Beneath, and bind us fast with Earth, to know

The strength of her desires,
 The sternness of her woe.

Rain! O the glad refresher of the grain!
 And welcome waterspouts, had we sweet rain!

IV

Now, shepherd, see thy word, where without shower

A borderless low blotting Westward spreads.
 The hall-clock holds the valley on the hour;
 Across an inner chamber thunder treads:

The dead leaf trips, the tree-top swings, the floor

Of dust whirls, dropping lumped: near thunder speaks,

And drives the dames to door,
 Their kerchiefs flapped at cheeks.

Rain! O the glad refresher of the grain!
 And welcome waterspouts of blessed rain!

V

Through night, with bedroom window wide for air,

Lay Susan tranced to hear all heaven descend:
 And gurgling voices came of Earth, and rare,
 Past flowerful, breathings, deeper than life's end,

From her heaved breast of sacred common
mold;
Whereby this lone-laid wife was moved to
feel

Unworded things and old
To her pained heart appeal.
Rain! O the glad refresher of the grain!
And down in deluges of blessed rain!

VI

At morn she stood to live for ear and sight,
Love sky or cloud, or rose or grasses drenched.
A lureful devil, that in glow-worm light
Set languor writhing all its folds, she quenched.
But she would muse when neighbors praised
her face,

Her services, and staunchness to her mate:
Knowing by some dim trace,
The change might bear a date.

Rain! O the glad refresher of the grain!
Thrice beauteous is our sunshine after rain!

MEDITATION UNDER
STARS

WHAT links are ours with orbs that are
So resolutely far:
The solitary asks, and they
Give radiance as from a shield:
Still at the death of day,
The seen, the unrevealed.
Implacable they shine
To us who would of Life obtain
An answer for the life we strain
To nourish with one sign.
Nor can imagination throw
The penetrative shaft: we pass
The breath of thought, who would divine
If haply they may grow
As Earth; have our desire to know;
If life comes there to grain from grass,
And flowers like ours of toil and pain;
Has passion to beat bar,
Win space from cleaving brain;
The mystic link attain,
Whereby star holds on star.

Those visible immortals beam
Allurement to the dream:
Ireful at human hungers brook
No question in the look.
For ever virgin to our sense,
Remote they wane to gaze intense:

Prolong it, and in ruthlessness they smite
The beating heart behind the ball of sight:
Till we conceive their heavens hoar,
Those lights they raise but sparkles froze,
And Earth, our blood-warm Earth, a shud-
dering prey
To that frigidity of brainless ray.

Yet space is given for breath of thought
Beyond our bounds when musing: more
When to that musing love is brought,
And love is asked of love's wherefore.
'Tis Earth's, her gift; else have we nought:
Her gift, her secret, here our tie.
And not with her and yonder sky?
Bethink you: were it Earth alone
Breeds love, would not her region be
The sole delight and throne
Of generous Deity?

To deeper than this ball of sight
Appeal the lustrous people of the night.
Fronting yon shoreless, sown with fiery sails,
It is our ravenous that quails,
Flesh by its craven thirsts and fears dis-
traught.

The spirit leaps alight,
Doubts not in them is he,
The binder of his sheaves, the sane, the right:
Of magnitude to magnitude is wrought,
To feel it large of the great life they hold:
In them to come, or vaster interwolved,
The issues known in us, our unsolved solved:
That there with toil Life climbs the selfsame
Tree,
Whose roots enrichment have from ripeness
dropped.
So may we read and little find them cold:
Let it but be the lord of Mind to guide
Our eyes; no branch of Reason's growing
lopped;
Nor dreaming on a dream; but fortified
By day to penetrate black midnight; see,
Hear, feel, outside the senses; even that we,
The specks of dust upon a mound of mold,
We who reflect those rays, though low our
place,
To them are lastingly allied.

So may we read, and little find them cold:
Not frosty lamps illumining dead space,
Not distant aliens, not senseless Powers.
The fire is in them whereof we are born;
The music of their motion may be ours.

Spirit shall deem them beckoning Earth and
voiced
Sisterly to her, in her beams rejoiced.
Of love, the grand impulsion, we behold
The love that lends her grace
Among the starry fold.
Then at new flood of customary morn,

Look at her through her showers,
Her mists, her streaming gold,
A wonder edges the familiar face:
She wears no more that robe of printed
hours;
Half strange seems Earth, and sweeter than
her flowers.

ROBERT BRIDGES (1844—)

Robert Seymour Bridges was born on 23 October, 1844. He was educated at Eton and at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He then studied medicine at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London, and was afterwards a physician at this and other London hospitals, but retired from the practice of medicine in 1882. Poetry, indeed, was the art for which he was born, and he was fortunately able to give himself over to its study and practice. His earliest poems long ago excited the admiration of a few readers, who lamented that they were practically unobtainable, existing only in privately printed editions. When later, however, these and other poems were regularly published they did not immediately win for themselves a large public. The reason for this is not far to seek. There is little or nothing that is obviously contemporary in Dr. Bridges' poetry, either in its style or in its content, nor does it have any sensational elements susceptible of cheap exploitation. Moreover, even in his lyrics, by general consent Dr. Bridges' most successful poems, deep or strong feeling is not so evident as fineness of feeling and carefully restrained expression—qualities which do not make for immediate and widely popular response. Dr. Bridges is, in fact, a learned and painstaking artist, consciously writing in the great tradition of English verse, and caring for no meaner reward than the consciousness of work done as well as may be. As a consequence he is beyond question the most faultless artist among recent English poets, standing pre-eminent for his classic grace, for perfect unity of form and content, for his mastery of delicate harmony, and for a simplicity of thought and expression which is itself the last word in deliberate art. Dr. Bridges' high achievement was given official recognition when he was in 1913 appointed Poet Laureate.

THE GROWTH OF LOVE¹

XVII

SAY who be these light-bearded, sunburnt
faces

In negligent and travel-stained array,
That in the city of Dante come to-day,
Haughtily visiting her holy places?
O these be noble men that hide their graces,
True England's blood, her ancient glory's
stay,

By tales of fame diverted on their way
Home from the rule of oriental races.

Life-trifling lions these, of gentle eyes
And motion delicate, but swift to fire
For honor, passionate where duty lies,
Most loved and loving: and they quickly
tire
Of Florence, that she one day more denies
The embrace of wife and son, of sister or
sire.

¹The following poems are reprinted with the permission of Dr. Bridges and of Mr. John Murray.

The earliest edition of *The Growth of Love*, consisting then of 24 sonnets, was published in 1876. The sequence, extended to 79 sonnets, was privately printed in 1889. Ten of these sonnets were omitted when the sequence was reprinted in Vol. I of the collected edition, in 1898.

XXI

O flesh and blood, comrade to tragic pain
And clownish merriment; whose sense could
wake
Sermons in stones, and count death but an
ache,
All things as vanity, yet nothing vain:
The world, set in thy heart, thy passionate
strain
Revealed anew; but thou for man didst
make
Nature twice natural, only to shake
Her kingdom with the creatures of thy brain.

Lo, Shakespeare, since thy time nature is
loath
To yield to art her fair supremacy;
In conquering one thou hast so enriched both.
What shall I say? for God—whose wise
decree
Confirmeth all He did by all He doth—
Doubled His whole creation making thee.

XXVII

The fabled sea-snake, old Leviathan,
Or else what grisly beast of scaly chine²
That champed the ocean-wrack and swashed
the brine,
Before the new and milder days of man,

²Crest.

Had never rib nor bray¹ nor swindging² fan
Like his iron swimmer of the Clyde or Tyne,
Late-born of golden seed to breed a line
Of offspring swifter and more huge of plan.

Straight is her going, for upon the sun
When once she hath looked, her path and
place are plain;
With tireless speed she smiteth one by one
The shuddering seas and foams along the
main;
And her eased breath, when her wild race is
run,
Roars through her nostrils like a hurricane.

XLVII

Since then 'tis only pity looking back,
Fear looking forward, and the busy mind
Will in one woeful moment more upwind
Than lifelong years unroll of bitter or black;
What is man's privilege, his hoarding knack
Of memory with foreboding so combined,
Whereby he comes to dream he hath of kind³
The perpetuity which all things lack?

Which but to hope is doubtful joy, to have
Being a continuance of what, alas,
We mourn, and scarcely bear with to the
grave;
Or something so unknown that it o'erpass
The thought of comfort, and the sense that
gave
Cannot consider it through any glass.

L

The world comes not to an end: her city-
hives
Swarm with the tokens of a changeless trade,
With rolling wheel, driver and flagging jade,
Rich men and beggars, children, priests and
wives.
New homes on old are set, as lives on lives;
Invention with invention overlaid:
But still or tool or toy or book or blade
Shaped for the hand, that holds and toils and
strives.

The men to-day toil as their fathers taught,
With little bettered means; for works depend
On works and overlap, and thought on
thought:
And through all change the smiles of hope
amend

¹Cry. ²Hard-striking. ³By nature.

The weariest face. the same love changed in
nought:
In this thing too the world comes not to an
end.

LI

O my uncared-for songs, what are ye worth,
That in my secret book with so much care
I write you, this one here and that one there,
Marking the time and order of your birth?
How, with a fancy so unkind to mirth,
A sense so hard, a style so worn and bare,
Look ye for any welcome anywhere
From any shelf or heart-home on the earth?

Should others ask you this, say then I
yearned
To write you such as once, when I was young,
Finding I should have loved and thereto
turned.
'Twere something yet to live again among
The gentle youth beloved, and where I
learned
My art, be there remembered for my song.

LIV

Since not the enamored sun with glance more
fond
Kisses the foliage of his sacred tree,
Than doth my waking thought arise on thee,
Loving none near thee, like thee nor beyond;
Nay, since I am sworn thy slave, and in the
bond
Is writ my promise of eternity;
Since to such high hope thou'st encouraged
me,
That if thou look but from me I despond;

Since thou'rt my all in all, O think of this:
Think of the dedication of my youth:
Think of my loyalty, my joy, my bliss:
Think of my sorrow, my despair and ruth,
My sheer annihilation if I miss:
Think—if thou shouldst be false—think of
thy truth.

LXII

I will be what God made me, nor protest
Against the bent of genius in my time,
That science of my friends robs all the best,
While I love beauty, and was born to rhyme.
Be they our mighty men, and let me dwell
In shadow among the mighty shades of old,
With love's forsaken palace for my cell;
Whence I look forth and all the world behold,

And say, These better days, in best things
 worse,
 This bastardy of time's magnificence,
 Will mend in fashion and throw off the curse,
 To crown new love with higher excellence.
 * Cursed though I be to live my life alone,
 My toil is for man's joy, his joy my own.

LXIV

Ye blessed saints, that now in heaven enjoy
 The purchase of those tears, the world's
 disdain,
 Doth Love still with his war your peace
 annoy,
 Or hath Death freed you from his ancient
 pain?
 Have ye no springtide, and no burst of
 May
 In flowers and leafy trees, when solemn night
 Pants with love-music, and the holy day
 Breaks on the ear with songs of heavenly
 light?

What make ye and what strive for? keep
 ye thought
 Of us, or in new excellence divine
 Is old forgot? or do ye count for nought
 What the Greek did and what the Floren-
 tine?¹
 We keep your memories well: O in your
 store
 Live not our best joys treasured evermore?

ELEGY

CLEAR and gentle stream!
 Known and loved so long,
 That hast heard the song
 And the idle dream
 Of my boyish day;
 While I once again
 Down thy margin stray,
 In the selfsame strain
 Still my voice is spent,
 With my old lament
 And my idle dream,
 Clear and gentle stream!

Where my old seat was
 Here again I sit,
 Where the long boughs knit
 Over stream and grass
 A translucent eaves:
 Where back eddies play

Shipwreck with the leaves,
 And the proud swans stray,
 Sailing one by one
 Out of stream and sun,
 And the fish lie cool
 In their chosen pool.

Many an afternoon
 Of the summer day
 Dreaming here I lay;
 And I know how soon,
 Idly at its hour,
 First the deep bell hums
 From the minster tower,
 And then evening comes,
 Creeping up the glade,
 With her lengthening shade,
 And the tardy boon
 Of her brightening moon.

Clear and gentle stream!
 Ere again I go
 Where thou dost not flow,
 Well does it besem
 Thee to hear again
 Once my youthful song,
 That familiar strain
 Silent now so long:
 Be as I content
 With my old lament
 And my idle dream,
 Clear and gentle stream.

ELEGY

THE wood is bare: a river-mist is steeping
 The trees that winter's chill of life be-
 reaves:

Only their stiffened boughs break silence,
 weeping
 Over their fallen leaves;

That lie upon the dank earth brown and
 rotten,

Miry and matted in the soaking wet:
 Forgotten with the spring, that is forgotten
 By them that can forget.

Yet it was here we walked when ferns were
 springing,

And through the mossy bank shot bud and
 blade:—

Here found in summer, when the birds were
 singing,

A green and pleasant shade.

¹Homer and Dante.

'Twas here we loved in sunnier days and
greener;
And now, in this disconsolate decay,
I come to see her where I most have seen her,
And touch the happier day.

For on this path, at every turn and corner,
The fancy of her figure on me falls:
Yet walks she with the slow step of a
mourner,
Nor hears my voice that calls.

So through my heart there winds a track of
feeling,
A path of memory, that is all her own:
Whereto her phantom beauty ever stealing
Haunts the sad spot alone.

About her steps the trunks are bare, the
branches
Drip heavy tears upon her downcast head;
And bleed from unseen wounds that no sun
stanches,
For the year's sun is dead.

And dead leaves wrap the fruits that summer
planted:
And birds that love the South have taken
wing.
The wanderer, loitering o'er the scene
enchanted,
Weeps, and despairs of spring.

I WILL NOT LET THEE GO

I WILL not let thee go.
Ends all our month-long love in this?
Can it be summed up so,
Quit in a single kiss?
I will not let thee go.

I will not let thee go.
If thy words' breath could scare thy deeds,
As the soft south can blow
And toss the feathered seeds,
Then might I let thee go.

I will not let thee go.
Had not the great sun seen, I might;
Or were he reckoned slow
To bring the false to light,
Then might I let thee go.

I will not let thee go.
The stars that crowd the summer skies
Have watched us so below
With all their million eyes,
I dare not let thee go.

I will not let thee go.
Have we not chid the changeful moon,
Now rising late, and now
Because she set too soon,
And shall I let thee go?

I will not let thee go.
Have not the young flowers been content,
Plucked ere their buds could blow,
To seal our sacrament?
I cannot let thee go.

I will not let thee go.
I hold thee by too many bands:
Thou sayest farewell, and lo!
I have thee by the hands,
And will not let thee go.

TRIOLET

ALL women born are so perverse
No man need boast their love possessing.
If nought seem better, nothing's worse:
All women born are so perverse.
From Adam's wife, that proved a curse
Though God had made her for a blessing,
All women born are so perverse
No man need boast their love possessing.

A PASSER-BY

WHITHER, O splendid ship, thy white sails
crowding,
Leaning across the bosom of the urgent
West,
That fearest nor sea rising, nor sky clouding,
Whither away, fair rover, and what thy
quest?
Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales
oppressed,
When skies are cold and misty, and hail is
hurling,
Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest
In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails
furling.

I there before thee, in the country that well
thou knowest,
Already arrived am inhaling the odorous
air:

I watch thee enter unerringly where thou
goest,
And anchor queen of the strange shipping
there,
Thy sails for awnings spread, thy masts
bare;

Nor is aught from the foaming reef to the
snow-capped, grandest

Peak, that is over the feathery palms more
fair

Than thou, so upright, so stately, and still
thou standest.

And yet, O splendid ship, unhailed and
nameless,

I know not if, aiming a fancy, I rightly
divine

That thou hast a purpose joyful, a courage
blameless,

Thy port assured in a happier land than
mine.

But for all I have given thee, beauty
enough is thine,

As thou, aslant with trim tackle and shroud-
ing,

From the proud nostril curve of a prow's
line

In the offing scatterest foam, thy white sails
crowding.

THERE IS A HILL BESIDE THE SILVER THAMES

THERE is a hill beside the silver Thames,
Shady with birch and beech and odorous
pine:

And brilliant underfoot with thousand gems
Steeplly the thickets to his floods decline.

Straight trees in every place
Their thick tops interlace,
And pendant branches trail their foliage fine
Upon his watery face.

Swift from the sweltering pasturage he flows:
His stream, alert to seek the pleasant shade,
Pictures his gentle purpose, as he goes
Straight to the caverned pool his toil has
made.

His winter floods lay bare
The stout roots in the air:

His summer streams are cool, when they have
played
Among their fibrous hair.

A rushy island guards the sacred bower,
And hides it from the meadow, where in
peace

The lazy cows wrench many a scented flower,
Robbing the golden market of the bees:

And laden barges float

By banks of myosote;¹

And scented flag and golden flower-de-lys

Delay the loitering boat.

And on this side the island, where the pool
Eddies away, are tangled mass on mass

The water-weeds, that net the fishes cool,

And scarce allow a narrow stream to pass;

Where spreading crowfoot mars

The drowning nenuphars,²

Waving the tassels of her silken grass

Below her silver stars.

But in the purple pool there nothing grows,
Not the white water-lily spoke with gold;

Though best she loves the hollows, and well
knows

On quiet streams her broad shields to unfold:

Yet should her roots but try

Within these deeps to lie,

Not her long reaching stalk could ever hold

Her waxen head so high.

Sometimes an angler comes, and drops his
hook

Within its hidden depths, and 'gainst a tree

Leaning his rod, reads in some pleasant book,

Forgetting soon his pride of fishery;

And dreams, or falls asleep,

While curious fishes peep

About his nibbled bait, or scornfully

Dart off and rise and leap.

And sometimes a slow figure 'neath the trees,
In ancient-fashioned smock, with tottering
care

Upon a staff propping his weary knees,

May by the pathway of the forest fare:

As from a buried day

Across the mind will stray

Some perishing mute shadow,—and unaware

He passeth on his way.

¹Forget-me-not.

²Water-lilies.

Else, he that wishes solitude is safe,
Whether he bathe at morning in the stream:
Or lead his love there when the hot hours
chafe

The meadows, busy with a blurring steam;
Or watch, as fades the light,
The gibbous moon¹ grow bright,
Until her magic rays dance in a dream,
And glorify the night.

Where is this bower beside the silver
Thames?

O pool and flowery thickets, hear my vow!
O trees of freshest foliage and straight stems,
No sharer of my secret I allow:

Lest ere I come the while
Strange feet your shades defile;
Or lest the burly oarsman turn his prow
Within your guardian isle.

SPRING

ODE I

INVITATION TO THE COUNTRY

AGAIN with pleasant green
Has Spring renewed the wood,
And where the bare trunks stood
Are leafy arbors seen;
And back on budding boughs
Come birds, to court and pair,
Whose rival amorous vows
Amaze the scented air.

The freshets are unbound,
And leaping from the hill,
Their mossy banks refill
With streams of light and sound:
And scattered down the meads,
From hour to hour unfold
A thousand buds and beads
In stars and cups of gold.

Now hear, and see, and note,
The farms are all astir,
And every laborer
Has doffed his winter coat;
And how with specks of white
They dot the brown hillside,
Or jaunt and sing outright
As by their teams they stride.

They sing to feel the Sun
Regain his wanton strength;
To know the year at length
Rewards their labor done;
To see the rootless stake
They set bare in the ground,
Burst into leaf, and shake
Its grateful scent around.

Ah now an evil lot
Is his, who toils for gain,
Where crowded chimneys stain
The heavens his choice forgot;
'Tis on the blighted trees
That deck his garden dim,
And in the tainted breeze,
That sweet Spring comes to him.

Far sooner I would choose
The life of brutes that bask,
Than set myself a task,
Which inborn powers refuse:
And rather far enjoy
The body, than invent
A duty, to destroy
The ease which nature sent;

And country life I praise,
And lead, because I find
The philosophic mind
Can take no middle ways;
She will not leave her love
To mix with men, her art
Is all to strive above
The crowd, or stand apart.

Thrice happy he, the rare
Prometheus, who can play
With hidden things, and lay
New realms of nature bare;
Whose venturous step has trod
Hell underfoot, and won
A crown from man and God
For all that he has done.—

That highest gift of all,
Since crabbéd fate did flood
My heart with sluggish blood,
I look not mine to call;
But, like a truant freed,
Fly to the woods, and claim
A pleasure for the deed
Of my inglorious name:

¹The moon is gibbous when its bright part is greater than a semicircle but less than a circle.

And am content, denied
The best, in choosing right;
For Nature can delight
Fancies unoccupied
With ecstasies so sweet
As none can even guess,
Who walk not with the feet
Of joy in idleness.

Then leave your joyless ways,
My friend, my joys to see.
The day you come shall be
The choice of chosen days:
You shall be lost, and learn
New being, and forget
The world, till your return
Shall bring your first regret.

SPRING

ODE II

REPLY

BEHOLD! the radiant Spring,
In splendor decked anew,
Down from her heaven of blue
Returns on sunlit wing:
The zephyrs of her train
In fleecy clouds disport,
And birds to greet her reign
Summon their silvan court.

And here in street and square
The prisoned trees contest
Her favor with the best,
To robe themselves full fair:
And forth their buds provoke,
Forgetting winter brown,
And all the mire and smoke
That wrapped the dingy town.

Now he that loves indeed
His pleasure must awake,
Lest any pleasure take
Its flight, and he not heed;
For of his few short years
Another now invites
His hungry soul, and cheers
His life with new delights.

And who loves Nature more
Than he, whose painful art
Has taught and skilled his heart
To read her skill and lore?

Whose spirit leaps more high,
Plucking the pale primrose,
Than his whose feet must fly
The pasture where it grows?

One long in city pent
Forgets, or must complain:
But think not I can stain
My heaven with discontent;
Nor wallow with that sad,
Backsliding herd, who cry
That Truth must make man bad,
And pleasure is a lie.

Rather while Reason lives
To mark me from the beast,
I'll teach her serve at least
To heal the wound she gives:
Nor need she strain her powers
Beyond a common flight,
To make the passing hours
Happy from morn till night.

Since health our toil rewards,
And strength is labor's prize,
I hate not, nor despise
The work my lot accords;
Nor fret with fears unkind
The tender joys, that bless
My hard-won peace of mind,
In hours of idleness.

Then what charm company
Can give, know I,—if wine
Go round, or throats combine
To set dumb music free.
Or deep in wintertide
When winds without make moan,
I love my own fireside
Not least when most alone.

Then oft I turn the page
In which our country's name,
Spoiling the Greek of fame,
Shall sound in every age:¹
Or some Terentian play
Renew, whose excellent
Adjusted folds betray
How once Menander went.²

¹Shakespeare's fame impairs Homer's to this extent, that we put the two beside each other where once Homer stood alone.

²Terence's plays are, so to say, Roman reflections of the Greek comedies of Menander, whose works have perished or survive only in fragments.

Or if grave study suit
 The yet unwearied brain,
 Plato can teach again,
 And Socrates dispute;
 Till fancy in a dream
 Confront their souls with mine,
 Crowning the mind supreme,
 And her delights divine.

While pleasure yet can be
 Pleasant, and fancy sweet,
 I bid all care retreat
 From my philosophy;
 Which, when I come to try
 Your simpler life, will find,
 I doubt not, joys to vie
 With those I leave behind.

DEJECTION

WHEREFORE to-night so full of care,
 My soul, revolving hopeless strife,
 Pointing at hindrance, and the bare
 Painful escapes of fitful life?

Shaping the doom that may befall
 By precedent of terror past:
 By love dishonored, and the call
 Of friendship slighted at the last?

By treasured names, the little store
 That memory out of wreck could save
 Of loving hearts, that gone before
 Call their old comrade to the grave?

O soul, be patient: thou shalt find
 A little matter mend all this;
 Some strain of music to thy mind,
 Some praise for skill not spent amiss.

Again shall pleasure overflow
 Thy cup with sweetness, thou shalt taste
 Nothing but sweetness, and shalt grow
 Half sad for sweetness run to waste.

O happy life! I hear thee sing,
 O rare delight of mortal stuff!
 I praise my days for all they bring,
 Yet are they only not enough.

LONDON SNOW

WHEN men were all asleep the snow came
 flying,
 In large white flakes falling on the city
 brown,
 Stealthily and perpetually settling and
 loosely lying,
 Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy
 town;

Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs
 failing;
 Lazily and incessantly floating down and
 down:

Silently sifting and veiling road, roof and
 railing;
 Hiding difference, making unevenness even,
 Into angles and crevices softly drifting and
 sailing.

All night it fell, and when full inches seven
 It lay in the depth of its uncompacted
 lightness,

The clouds blew off from a high and frosty
 heaven;

And all woke earlier for the unaccustomed
 brightness

Of the winter dawning, the strange un-
 heavenly glare:

The eye marveled—marveled at the dazzling
 whiteness;

The ear hearkened to the stillness of the
 solemn air;

No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot
 falling,

And the busy morning cries came thin and
 spare.

Then boys I heard, as they went to school,
 calling,

They gathered up the crystal manna to
 freeze

Their tongues with tasting, their hands with
 snowballing;

Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to the
 knees;

Or peering up from under the white-mossed
 wonder,

"O look at the trees!" they cried, "O look
 at the trees!"

With lessened load a few carts creak and
 blunder,

Following along the white deserted way,
 A country company long dispersed asunder:

When now already the sun, in pale dis-
 play

Standing by Paul's high dome,¹ spread forth
below
His sparkling beams, and awoke the stir of
the day.

For now doors open, and war is waged with
the snow;
And trains of somber men, past tale of
number,
Tread long brown paths, as toward their toil
they go:

But even for them awhile no cares en-
cumber
Their minds diverted; the daily word is
unspoken,
The daily thoughts of labor and sorrow
slumber
At the sight of the beauty that greets them,
for the charm they have broken.

THE PHILOSOPHER TO HIS MISTRESS

BECAUSE thou canst not see,
Because thou canst not know
The black and hopeless woe
That hath encompassed me:
Because, should I confess
The thought of my despair,
My words would wound thee less
Than swords can hurt the air:

Because with thee I seem
As one invited near
To taste the faery cheer
Of spirits in a dream;
Of whom he knoweth nought
Save that they vie to make
All motion, voice and thought
A pleasure for his sake:

Therefore more sweet and strange
Has been the mystery
Of thy long love to me,
That doth not quit, nor change,
Nor tax my solemn heart,
That kisseth in a gloom,
Knowing not who thou art
That givest, nor to whom.

Therefore the tender touch
Is more; more dear the smile:
And thy light words beguile
My wisdom overmuch:

And O with swiftness fly
The fancies of my song
To happy worlds, where I
Still in thy love belong.

O YOUTH WHOSE HOPE IS HIGH

O YOUTH whose hope is high,
Who dost to Truth aspire,
Whether thou live or die,
O look not back nor tire.

Thou that art bold to fly
Through tempest, flood and fire,
Nor dost not shrink to try
Thy heart in torments dire:

If thou canst Death defy,
If thy Faith is entire,
Press onward, for thine eye
Shall see thy heart's desire.

Beauty and love are nigh,
And with their deathless quire
Soon shall thine eager cry
Be numbered and expire.

I LOVE ALL BEAUTEOUS THINGS

I LOVE all beauteous things,
I seek and adore them;
God hath no better praise,
And man in his hasty days
Is honored for them.

I too will something make
And joy in the making;
Although to-morrow it seem
Like the empty words of a dream
Remembered on waking.

WHEN MY LOVE WAS AWAY

WHEN my love was away,
Full three days were not sped,
I caught my fancy astray
Thinking if she were dead,

And I alone, alone:
It seemed in my misery
In all the world was none
Ever so lone as I.

¹St. Paul's Cathedral.

I wept; but it did not shame
Nor comfort my heart: away
I rode as I might, and came
To my love at close of day.

The sight of her stilled my fears,
My fairest-hearted love:
And yet in her eyes were tears:
Which when I questioned of,

O now thou art come, she cried,
'Tis fled: but I thought to-day
I never could here abide,
If thou wert longer away.

SO SWEET LOVE SEEMED THAT APRIL MORN

So SWEET love seemed that April morn,
When first we kissed beside the thorn,
So strangely sweet, it was not strange
We thought that love could never change.

But I can tell—let truth be told—
That love will change in growing old;
Though day by day is nought to see,
So delicate his motions be.

And in the end 'twill come to pass
Quite to forget what once he was,
Nor even in fancy to recall
The pleasure that was all in all.

His little spring, that sweet we found,
So deep in summer floods is drowned,
I wonder, bathed in joy complete,
How love so young could be so sweet.

MY DELIGHT AND THY DELIGHT

MY DELIGHT and thy delight
Walking, like two angels white,
In the gardens of the night:

My desire and thy desire
Twining to a tongue of fire,
Leaping live, and laughing higher;
Through the everlasting strife
In the mystery of life.

Love, from whom the world begun,
Hath the secret of the sun.

Love can tell, and love alone,
Whence the million stars were strewn,
Why each atom knows its own,
How, in spite of woe and death,
Gay is life, and sweet is breath:

This he taught us, this we knew,
Happy in his science true,
Hand in hand as we stood
'Neath the shadows of the wood,
Heart to heart as we lay
In the dawning of the day.

MELANCHOLIA

THE sickness of desire, that in dark days
Looks on the imagination of despair,
Forgetteth man, and stinteth God his praise;
Nor but in sleep findeth a cure for care.

Uncertainty that once gave scope to dream
Of laughing enterprise and glory untold,
Is now a blackness that no stars redeem,
A wall of terror in a night of cold.

Fool! thou that hast impossibly desired
And now impatiently despair'st, see
How nought is changed: Joy's wisdom is at-
tired

Splendid for others' eyes if not for thee:
Not love or beauty or youth from earth is
fled:

If they delight thee not, 'tis thou art dead.

THOMAS HARDY (1840-)

Thomas Hardy was born in Dorsetshire, in the country, about three miles from Dorchester, on 2 June, 1840. He received his earlier education from his mother and from Dorchester schools. From 1856 until 1861 he was the pupil of an ecclesiastical architect of Dorchester, John Hicks. As a part of his work he sketched and measured many old country churches since pulled down or altered. During a portion of this period he also read Latin and Greek with a fellow-pupil and did other reading not related to his architectural studies. In 1862 he went to London and studied Gothic architecture under Sir A. Blomfield until 1867. During these years he also attended some classes at King's College. While his studies were being pursued to their completion there were already indications of the course which Mr. Hardy's life was actually to take, for he had begun to write verse as early as 1860, and he continued to do so throughout his years in London. In 1867 he moved from London to Weymouth, where he practised his profession of architecture. It is said that a promising career was opening up before him, but that he early experienced a disillusionment the like of which a thoughtful man can hardly escape on entering any profession. He learned, as he says in *Desperate Remedies*, that "those who get rich need have no skill at all as artists.—What need they have?—A certain kind of energy which men with any fondness for art possess very seldom indeed—an earnestness in making acquaintances, and a love for using them. They give their whole attention to the art of dining out, after mastering a few rudimentary facts to serve up in conversation." Probably this discovery increased Mr. Hardy's determination to cultivate another mode of expression, and, finding no publisher for the verse he had written, he turned for a time to prose and wrote a novel. That novel, *The Poor Man and the Lady*, still exists in manuscript but has never been published. It was submitted to Chapman and Hall, and was rejected, with good advice, by their reader, George Meredith. Fortunately Mr. Hardy, though he learned that it took "a judicious omission of your real thoughts to make a novel popular," proceeded to write *Desperate Remedies*, which was published, anonymously and at his own expense, in 1871. *Under the Greenwood Tree* or *the Mellstock Quire* was published, also anonymously, in 1872, and in the following year *A Pair of Blue Eyes* was published, over Mr. Hardy's name. This novel was successful enough to warrant his abandonment of architecture, and since 1873 his time has been given entirely to literature. In 1885 Mr. Hardy built the house on the outskirts of Dorchester, Max Gate, which remains his present home. His novels, in addition to those already mentioned, are: *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Hand of Ethelberta* (1876), *The Return of the Native* (1878), *The Trumpet-Major* (1879), *A Laodicean* (1881), *Two on a Tower* (1882), *The Life and Death of the Mayor of Casterbridge* (1885), *The Woodlanders* (1887), *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), *Jude the Obscure* (1895), and *The Well-Beloved* (1897). Mr. Hardy has also published several volumes of tales. His first volume of verse, *Wessex Poems*, written from 1865 onwards, was published in 1898. Other volumes are: *Poem of the Past and the Present* (1901), *The Dynasts*, an epic-drama of the war with Napoleon (1903-1908), *Time's Laughing-Stocks and Other Verses* (1909), *Satires of Circumstance* (1914), *Moments of Vision* (1917), and *Late Lyrics and Earlier* (1922).

Although some of Mr. Hardy's novels and poems have been bitterly criticized both for their frankness of speech and for the pessimistic outlook on life which they exhibit, still, their author's pre-eminent position in English literature of the last half-century has long since been universally acknowledged, and Mr. Hardy's old age has been full of many distinguished testimonies to his greatness of achievement, one of which is the Order of Merit, bestowed on him in 1910. As for Mr. Hardy's frankness, or truthfulness in speaking of things as they are, the time has already come when we begin to recognize this as something to commend. But concerning his pessimism questions may long remain. They arise not from the fact that Mr. Hardy has depicted life as a frustration of man's higher aims and nobler qualities, for this tragic fact is the theme of much of the world's greatest literature. But the questions arise because of the peculiar character of Mr. Hardy's view, which seems to rob us of our very humanity. His outlook, in truth, has been determined by the scientific thought dominant in the latter half of the nineteenth century, or is at least in full consonance with it. According to the view of science man was merely a complex mechanism, tossed into the air like a bubble by accident, and there the helpless victim of forces which he could neither understand nor control. This view of life Mr. Hardy tempers with certain inconsistencies inevitable in lifting it from the region of abstract theory to the concrete portrayal of recognizable human beings, and this is fortunate; for Mr. Hardy is a born tragic artist and the master of an austere style appropriate to this high theme, whereas, of course, on a basis of mechanistic determinism life loses even its tragedy in the abyss of illusion which is the sole stuff of consciousness.

HAP¹

IF BUT some vengeful god would call to me
From up the sky, and laugh: "Thou
suffering thing,
Know that thy sorrow is my ecstasy,
That thy love's loss is my hate's profiting!"

Then would I bear it, clench myself, and die,
Steeled by the sense of ire unmerited;
Half-eased in that a Powerfuller than I
Had willed and meted me the tears I shed.

But not so. How arrives it joy lies slain,
And why unblooms the best hope ever sown?
—Crass Casualty obstructs the sun and rain,
And dicing Time for gladness casts a
moan.

These purblind Doomsters had as readily
strown
Blisses about my pilgrimage as pain.

HER DEATH AND AFTER

THE summons was urgent: and forth I
went—

By the way of the Western Wall, so drear
On that winter night, and sought a gate,
Where one, by Fate,
Lay dying that I held dear.

And there, as I paused by her tenement,
And the trees shed on me their rime and hoar,
I thought of the man who had left her lone—
Him who made her his own
When I loved her, long before.

The rooms within had the piteous shine
That home-things wear when there's aught
amiss;

From the stairway floated the rise and fall
Of an infant's call,
Whose birth had brought her to this.

Her life was the price she would pay for that
whine—

For a child by the man she did not love.
"But let that rest for ever," I said,

And bent my tread
To the bedchamber above.

¹The following poems are reprinted with the permission of the Macmillan Company. *Hap* and the three following pieces are from *Wessex Poems and Other Verses*.

She took my hand in her thin white own,
And smiled her thanks—though nigh too
weak—

And made them a sign to leave us there,
Then faltered, ere
She could bring herself to speak.

"Just to see you—before I go—he'll condone
Such a natural thing now my time's not
much—

When Death is so near it hustles hence
All passioned sense
Between woman and man as such!

"My husband is absent. As heretofore
The City detains him. But, in truth,
He has not been kind. . . . I will
speak no blame,

But—the child is lame;
O, I pray she may reach his ruth!

"Forgive past days—I can say no more—
Maybe had we wed you would now
repine! . . .
But I treated you ill. I was punished.
Farewell!

—Truth shall I tell?

Would the child were yours and mine!

"As a wife I was true. But, such my un-
ease

That, could I insert a deed back in Time,
I'd make her yours, to secure your care;
And the scandal bear,
And the penalty for the crime!"

—When I had left, and the swinging trees
Rang above me, as lauding her candid say,
Another was I. Her words were enough:

Came smooth, came rough,
I felt I could live my day.

Next night she died; and her obsequies
In the Field of Tombs where the earthworks
frowned

Had her husband's heed. His tendance
spent,

I often went
And pondered by her mound.

All that year and the next year whiled,
And I still went thitherward in the gloam;
But the Town forgot her and her nook,
And her husband took

Another Love to his home.

And the rumor flew that the lame lone child
Whom she wished for its safety child of mine,
Was treated ill when offspring came
Of the new-made dame,
And marked a more vigorous line.

A smarter grief within me wrought
Than even at loss of her so dear
That the being whose soul my soul suffused
Had a child ill-used,
While I dared not interfere!

One eve as I stood at my spot of thought
In the white-stoned Garth,¹ brooding thus her
wring,
Her husband neared; and to shun his nod
By her hallowed sod
I went from the tombs among

To the Cirque of the Gladiators which
faced—
That haggard mark of Imperial Rome,
Whose Pagan echoes mock the chime
Of our Christian time
From its hollows of chalk and loam.

The sun's gold touch was scarce displaced
From the vast Arena where men once bled,
When her husband followed; bowed, half-
passed
With lip upcast;
Then halting sullenly said:

"It is noised that you visit my first wife's
tomb.

Now, I gave her an honored name to bear
While living, when dead. So I've claim to
ask

By what right you task
My patience by vigiling there?

"There's decency even in death, I assume;
Preserve it, sir, and keep away;
For the mother of my first-born you
Show mind undue!
—Sir, I've nothing more to say."

A desperate stroke discerned I then—
God pardon—or pardon not—the lie;
She had sighed that she wished (lest the child
should pine
Of slights) 'twere mine,
So I said: "But the father I.

"That you thought it yours is the way of men;
But I won her troth long ere your day:
You learned how, in dying, she summoned
me?

'Twas in fealty.
—Sir, I've nothing more to say,

"Save that, if you'll hand me my little maid,
I'll take her, and rear her, and spare you toil.
Think it more than a friendly act none can;
I'm a lonely man,
While you've a large pot to boil.

"If not, and you'll put it to ball or blade—
To-night, to-morrow night, anywhen—
I'll meet you here. . . . But think of it,
And in season fit
Let me hear from you again."

—Well, I went away, hoping; but nought I
heard
Of my stroke for the child, till there greeted
me
A little voice that one day came
To my window-frame
And babbled innocently:

"My father who's not my own, sends word
I'm to stay here, sir, where I belong!"
Next a writing came: "Since the child was
the fruit
Of your lawless suit,
Pray take her, to right a wrong."

And I did. And I gave the child my love,
And the child loved me, and estranged us
none.

But compunctions loomed; for I'd harmed
the dead

By what I said
For the good of the living one.

—Yet though, God wot, I am sinner enough,
And unworthy the woman who drew me so,
Perhaps this wrong for her darling's good
She forgives, or would,
If only she could know!

NATURE'S QUESTIONING

WHEN I look forth at dawning, pool,
Field, flock, and lonely tree,
All seem to gaze at me
Like chastened children sitting silent in a
school;

¹Enclosure.

Their faces dulled, constrained, and worn,
 As though the master's ways
 Through the long teaching days
 Had cowed them till their early zest was
 overborne.

Upon them stirs in lippings mere
 (As if once clear in call,
 But now scarce breathed at all)—
 "We wonder, ever wonder, why we find us
 here!

"Has some Vast Imbecility,
 Mighty to build and blend,
 But impotent to tend,
 Framed us in jest, and left us now to
 hazardry?

"Or come we of an Automaton
 Unconscious of our pains? . . .
 Or are we live remains
 Of Godhead dying downwards, brain and eye
 now gone?

"Or is it that some high Plan betides,
 As yet not understood,
 Of Evil stormed by Good,
 We the Forlorn Hope over which Achieve-
 ment strides?"

Thus things around. No answerer I. . .
 Meanwhile the winds, and rains,
 And Earth's old glooms and pains
 Are still the same, and Life and Death are
 neighbors nigh.

THE SLOW NATURE

(AN INCIDENT OF FROOM VALLEY)

"THY husband—poor, poor Heart!—is dead!
 Dead, out by Moreford Rise;
 A bull escaped the barton-shed,¹
 Gored him, and there he lies!"

—"Ha, ha—go away! 'Tis a tale, methink,
 Thou joker Kit!" laughed she.

"I've known thee many a year, Kit Twink,
 And ever hast thou fooled me!"

—"But, Mistress Damon—I can swear
 Thy goodman John is dead!
 And soon th'lt hear their feet who bear
 His body to his bed."

¹Farmyard-shed.

So unwontedly sad was the merry man's
 face—

That face which had long deceived—
 That she gazed and gazed; and then could
 trace

The truth there; and she believed.

She laid a hand on the dresser-ledge,
 And scanned far Egdon-side;
 And stood; and you heard the wind-swept
 sedge

And the rippling Froom; till she cried:

"O my chamber's untidied, unmade my bed,
 Though the day has begun to wear!
 'What a slovenly hussif!' it will be said,
 When they all go up my stair!"

She disappeared; and the joker stood
 Depressed by his neighbor's doom,
 And amazed that a wife struck to widow-
 hood

Thought first of her unkempt room.

But a fortnight thence she could take no food,
 And she pined in a slow decay;
 While Kit soon lost his mournful mood
 And laughed in his ancient way.

GOD—FORGOTTEN³

I TOWERED far, and lo! I stood within
 The presence of the Lord Most High,
 Sent thither by the sons of Earth, to win
 Some answer to their cry.

—"The Earth, sayest thou? The Human
 race?

By Me created? Sad its lot?

Nay: I have no remembrance of such place:
 Such world I fashioned not."

—"O Lord, forgive me when I say
 Thou spakest the word that made it all."

"The Earth of men—let me bethink
 me. . . . Yea!

I dimly do recall

"Some tiny sphere I built long back
 (Mid millions of such shapes of mine)
 So named. . . . It perished, surely—not a
 wrack

Remaining, or a sign?

²Housewife.

³This and the following two pieces are from *Poems
 of the Past and the Present*.

"It lost my interest from the first,
My aims therefor succeeding ill;
Haply it died of doing as it durst?"—
"Lord, it existeth still."—

"Dark, then, its life! For not a cry
Of aught it bears do I now hear;
Of its own act the threads were snapped
whereby
Its plaints had reached mine ear.

"It used to ask for gifts of good,
Till came its severance, self-entailed,
When sudden silence on that side ensued,
And has till now prevailed.

"All other orbs have kept in touch;
Their voicings reach me speedily.
Thy people took upon them overmuch
In sundering them from me!

"And it is strange—though sad enough—
Earth's race should think that one whose
call
Frames, daily, shining spheres of flawless
stuff
Must heed their tainted ball! . . .

"But sayest it is by pangs distraught,
And strife, and silent suffering?—
Sore grieved am I that injury should be
wrought
Even on so poor a thing!

"Thou shouldst have learned that *Not to*
Mend
For Me could mean but *Not to Know*:
Hence, Messengers! and straightway put
an end
To what men undergo." . . .

Homing at dawn, I thought to see
One of the Messengers standing by.
—Oh, childish thought! . . . Yet often it
comes to me
When trouble hovers nigh.

ON A FINE MORNING

WHENCE comes Solace?—Not from seeing
What is doing, suffering, being,
Not from noting Life's conditions,
Nor from heeding Time's monitions;

But in cleaving to the Dream,
And in gazing at the gleam
Whereby gray things golden seem.

Thus do I this heyday, holding
Shadows but as lights unfolding,
As no specious show this moment
With its iris-hued embowment;
But as nothing other than
Part of a benignant plan;
Proof that earth was made for man.

THE WELL-BELOVED

I WENT by star and planet shine
Towards the dear one's home
At Kingsbere, there to make her mine
When the next sun upclomb.

I edged the ancient hill and wood
Beside the Ikling Way,
Nigh where the Pagan temple stood
In the world's earlier day.

And as I quick and quicker walked
On gravel and on green,
I sang to sky, and tree, or talked
Of her I called my queen.

—“O faultless is her dainty form,
And luminous her mind;
She is the God-created norm
Of perfect womankind!”

A shape whereon one star-blink gleamed
Slid softly by my side,
A woman's; and her motion seemed
The motion of my bride.

And yet methought she'd drawn erstwhile
Out from the ancient leaze,¹
Where once were pile and peristyle
For men's idolatries.

—“O maiden lithe and lone, what may
Thy name and lineage be
Who so resemblest by this ray
My darling?—Art thou she?”

The Shape: “Thy bride remains within
Her father's grange and grove.”
—“Thou speakest rightly,” I broke in,
“Thou art not she I love.”

¹Meadow-land, or common.

—"Nay: though thy bride remains inside
Her father's walls," said she,
"The one most dear is with thee here,
For thou dost love but me."

Then I: "But she, my only choice,
Is now at Kingsbere Grove?"
Again her soft mysterious voice:
"I am thy only Love."

Thus still she vouched, and still I said,
"O sprite, that cannot be!" . . .
It was as if my bosom bled,
So much she troubled me.

The sprite resumed: "Thou hast trans-
ferred
To her dull form awhile
My beauty, fame, and deed, and word,
My gestures and my smile.

"O fatuous man, this truth infer,
Brides are not what they seem;
Thou lovest what thou dreamest her;
I am thy very dream!"

—"O then," I answered miserably,
Speaking as scarce I knew,
"My loved one, I must wed with thee
If what thou sayest be true!"

She, proudly, thinning in the gloom:
"Though, since troth-plight began,
I have ever stood as bride to groom,
I wed no mortal man!"

Thereat she vanished by the lane
Adjoining Kingsbere town,
Near where, men say, once stood the Fane
To Venus, on the Down.

—When I arrived and met my bride
Her look was pinched and thin,
As if her soul had shrunk and died,
And left a waste within.

THE CURATE'S KINDNESS

A WORKHOUSE IRONY

I

I THOUGHT they'd be strangers aroun' me.
But she's to be there!
Let me jump out o' wagon and go back and
drown me
At Pummery or Ten-Hatches Weir.

[—]This and the following five poems are from *Time's
Laughingstocks and Other Verses*.

II

I thought: "Well, I've come to the
Union—

The workhouse at last—
After honest hard work all the week, and
Communion
O' Zundays, these fifty years past.

III

"'Tis hard; but," I thought, "never mind
it:

There's gain in the end:
And when I get used to the place I shall find
it
A home, and may find there a friend.

IV

"Life there will be better than t'other,
For peace is assured.
The men in one wing and their wives in another
Is strictly the rule of the Board."

V

Just then one young Pa'son arriving
Steps up out of breath
To the side o' the wagon wherein we were
driving
To Union; and calls out and saith:

VI

"Old folks, that harsh order is altered,
Be not sick of heart!
The Guardians they poohed and they pished
and they paltered
When urged not to keep you apart.

VII

"'It is wrong,' I maintained, 'to divide
them,
Near forty years wed.'
'Very well, sir. We promise, then, they
shall abide them
In one wing together,' they said."

VIII

Then I sank—knew 'twas quite a foredone
thing
That misery should be
To the end! . . . To get freed of her there
was the one thing
Had made the change welcome to me.

IX

To go there was ending but badly;
 'Twas shame and 'twas pain;
 "But anyhow," thought I, "thereby I shall
 gladly
 Get free of this forty years' chain."

X

I thought they'd be strangers aroun' me,
 But she's to be there!
 Let me jump out o' wagon and go back and
 drown me
 At Pummery or Ten-Hatches Weir.

THE DAWN AFTER THE
DANCE

HERE is your parents' dwelling with its
 curtained windows telling
 Of no thought of us within it or of our
 arrival here;
 Their slumbers have been normal after one
 day more of formal
 Matrimonial commonplace and household
 life's mechanic gear.

I would be candid willingly, but dawn draws
 on so chillingly
 As to render further cheerlessness intolerable
 now,
 So I will not stand endeavoring to declare a
 day for severing,
 But will clasp you just as always—just the
 olden love avow.

Through serene and surly weather we have
 walked the ways together,
 And this long night's dance this year's end
 eve now finishes the spell;
 Yet we dreamed us but beginning a sweet
 sempiternal spinning
 Of a cord we have spun to breaking—too
 intemperately, too well.

Yes; last night we danced I know, Dear, as
 we did that year ago, Dear,
 When a new strange bond between our days
 was formed, and felt, and heard;
 Would that dancing were the worst thing
 from the latest to the first thing
 That the faded year can charge us with; but
 what avails a word!

That which makes man's love the lighter and
 the woman's burn no brighter
 Came to pass with us inevitably while
 slipped the shortening year. . . .
 And there stands your father's dwelling with
 its blind bleak windows telling
 That the vows of man and maid are frail as
 filmy gossamere.

MISCONCEPTION

I BUSIED myself to find a sure
 Snug hermitage
 That should preserve my Love secure
 From the world's rage;
 Where no unseemly saturnals,
 Or strident traffic-roars,
 Or hum of intervolved cabals
 Should echo at her doors.

I labored that the diurnal spin
 Of vanities
 Should not contrive to suck her in
 By dark degrees,
 And cunningly operate to blur
 Sweet teachings I had begun;
 And then I went full-heart to her
 To expound the glad deeds done.

She looked at me, and said thereto
 With a pitying smile,
 "And *this* is what has busied you
 So long a while?
 O poor exhausted one, I see
 You have worn you old and thin
 For naught! Those moils you fear for me
 I find most pleasure in!"

THE HOMECOMING

*GRUFFLY growled the wind on Toller downland
 broad and bare,
 And lonesome was the house, and dark; and
 few came there.*

"Now don't ye rub your eyes so red; we're
 home and have no cares;
 Here's a skimmer-cake for supper, peckled
 onions, and some pears;
 I've got a little keg o' summat strong, too,
 under stairs:
 —What, slight your husband's victuals?
 Other brides can tackle theirs!"

*The wind of winter mooded and mouthed their chimney like a horn,
And round the house and past the house 'twas leafless and lorn.*

"But my dear and tender poppet, then, how came ye to agree
In Ivel church this morning? Sure, there-right you married me!"
—"Hoo-hoo!—I don't know—I forgot how strange and far 'twould be,
An' I wish I was at home again with dear daddee!"

*Gruffly growled the wind on Toller downland broad and bare,
And lonesome was the house and dark; and few came there.*

"I didn't think such furniture as this was all you'd own,
And great black beams for ceiling, and a floor o' wretched stone,
And nasty pewter platters, horrid forks of steel and bone,
And a monstrous crock in chimney. 'Twas to me quite unbeknown!"

*Rattle rattle went the door; down flapped a cloud of smoke,
As shifting north the wicked wind assayed a smarter stroke.*

"Now sit ye by the fire, poppet; put yourself at ease:
And keep your little thumb out of your mouth, dear, please!
And I'll sing to 'ee a pretty song of lovely flowers and bees,
And happy lovers taking walks within a grove o' trees."

*Gruffly growled the wind on Toller Down, so bleak and bare,
And lonesome was the house, and dark; and few came there.*

"Now, don't ye gnaw your handkercher; 'twill hurt your little tongue,
And if you do feel spitish, 'tis because ye are over young;
But you'll be getting older, like us all, ere very long,
And you'll see me as I am—a man who never did 'ee wrong."

*Straight from Whit'sheet Hill to Bencill Lane the blusters pass,
Hitting hedges, milestones, handposts, trees, and tufts of grass.*

"Well, had I only known, my dear, that this was how you'd be,
I'd have married her of riper years that was so fond of me.
But since I can't, I've half a mind to run away to sea,
And leave 'ee to go barefoot to your d——d daddee!"

*Up one wall and down the other—past each window-pane—
Prance the gusts, and then away down Crimmer-crock's long lane.*

"I—I—don't know what to say to 't, since your wife I've vowed to be;
And as 'tis done, I s'pose here I must bide—poor me!
Aye—as you are ki-ki-kind, I'll try to live along with 'ee,
Although I'd fain have stayed at home with dear daddee!"

*Gruffly growled the wind on Toller Down, so bleak and bare,
And lonesome was the house and dark; and few came there.*

"That's right, my Heart! And though on haunted Toller Down we be,
And the wind swears things in chimley, we'll to supper merrily!
So don't ye tap your shoe so pettish-like; but smile at me,
And ye'll soon forget to sock and sigh for dear daddee!"

TO SINCERITY

O SWEET sincerity!—
Where modern methods be
What scope for thine and thee?

Life may be sad past saying,
Its greens for ever graying,
Its faiths to dust decaying;

And youth may have foreknown it,
And riper seasons shown it,
But custom cries: "Disown it:

"Say ye rejoice, though grieving,
Believe, while unbelieving,
Behold, without perceiving!"

—Yet, would men look at true things,
And unilluded view things,
And count to bear undue things,

The real might mend the seeming,
Facts better their foredeeming,
And Life its disesteeming.

GEORGE MEREDITH

(1828-1909)

Forty years back, when much had place
That since has perished out of mind,
I heard that voice and saw that face.

He spoke as one afoot will wind
A morning horn ere men awake;
His note was trenchant, turning kind.

He was of those whose wit can shake
And riddle to the very core
The counterfeits that Time will break . . .

Of late, when we two met once more,
The luminous countenance and rare
Shone just as forty years before.

So that, when now all tongues declare
His shape unseen by his green hill,¹
I scarce believe he sits not there.

No matter. Further and further still
Through the world's vaporous vitiate air
His words wing on—as live words will.

THE FACE AT THE CASEMENT²

IF EVER joy leave
An abiding sting of sorrow,
So befell it on the morrow
Of that May eve. . . .

The traveled sun dropped
To the north-west, low and lower,
The pony's trot grew slower,
Until we stopped.

¹Box Hill, Surrey, where his home was.

²This and the following four poems are from *Satires of Circumstance. Lyrics and Reveries*.

"This cozy house just by
I must call at for a minute,
A sick man lies within it
Who soon will die.

"He wished to—marry me,
So I am bound, when I drive near him,
To inquire, if but to cheer him,
How he may be."

A message was sent in,
And wordlessly we waited,
Till some one came and stated
The bulletin.

And that the sufferer said,
For her call no words could thank her;
As his angel he must rank her
Till life's spark fled.

Slowly we drove away,
When I turned my head, although not
Called to: why I turned I know not
Even to this day:

And lo, there in my view
Pressed against an upper lattice
Was a white face, gazing at us
As we withdrew.

And well did I divine
It to be the man's there dying,
Who but lately had been sighing
For her pledged mine.

Then I deigned a deed of hell;
It was done before I knew it;
What devil made me do it
I cannot tell!

Yes, while he gazed above,
I put my arm about her
That he might see, nor doubt her
My plighted Love.

The pale face vanished quick,
As if blasted, from the casement,
And my shame and self-abasement
Began their prick.

And they prick on, ceaselessly,
For that stab in Love's fierce fashion
Which, unfired by lover's passion,
Was foreign to me.

She smiled at my caress,
But why came the soft embowment
Of her shoulder at that moment
She did not guess.

Long long years has he lain
In thy garth, O sad Saint Cleather:
What tears there, bared to weather,
Will cleanse that stain!

Love is long-suffering, brave,
Sweet, prompt, precious as a jewel;
But jealousy is cruel,
Cruel as the grave!

LOST LOVE

I PLAY my sweet old airs—
The airs he knew
When our love was true—
But he does not balk
His determined walk,
And passes up the stairs.

I sing my songs once more,
And presently hear
His footstep near
As if it would stay;
But he goes his way,
And shuts a distant door.

So I wait for another morn,
And another night
In this soul-sick blight;
And I wonder much
As I sit, why such
A woman as I was born!

AH, ARE YOU DIGGING ON MY GRAVE?

"Ah, are you digging on my grave
My loved one?—planting rue?"
—"No: yesterday he went to wed
One of the brightest wealth has bred.
'It cannot hurt her now,' he said,
'That I should not be true.'"

"Then who is digging on my grave?
My nearest dearest kin?"
—"Ah, no: they sit and think, 'What use!
What good will planting flowers produce?
No tendance of her mound can loose
Her spirit from Death's gin.'"

"But some one digs upon my grave?
My enemy?—prodding sly?"
—"Nay: when she heard you had passed
the Gate

That shuts on all flesh soon or late,
She thought you no more worth her hate,
And cares not where you lie."

"Then, who is digging on my grave?
Say—since I have not guessed!"
—"O it is I, my mistress dear,
Your little dog, who still lives near,
And much I hope my movements here
Have not disturbed your rest?"

"Ah, yes! *You* dig upon my grave . . .
Why flashed it not on me
That one true heart was left behind!
What feeling do we ever find
To equal among human kind
A dog's fidelity!"

"Mistress, I dug upon your grave
To bury a bone, in case
I should be hungry near this spot
When passing on my daily trot.
I am sorry, but I quite forgot
It was your resting-place."

THE SWEET HUSSY

IN HIS early days he was quite surprised
When she told him she was compromised
By meetings and lingerings at his whim,
And thinking not of herself but him;
While she lifted orbs aggrieved and round
That scandal should so soon abound
(As she had raised them to nine or ten
Of antecedent nice young men):
And in remorse he thought with a sigh,
How good she is, and how bad am I!—
It was years before he understood
That she was the wicked one—he the good.

YOU WERE THE SORT THAT MEN FORGET¹

You were the sort that men forget;
Though I—not yet!—
Perhaps not ever. Your slighted weakness
Adds to the strength of my regret!

¹This and the following poems are from *Moments of Vision and Miscellaneous Verses*.

You'd not the art—you never had
 For good or bad—
 To make men see how sweet your meaning,
 Which, visible, had charmed them glad.

You would, by words inept let fall,
 Offend them all,
 Even if they saw your warm devotion
 Would hold your life's blood at their call.

You lacked the eye to understand
 Those friends offhand
 Whose mode was crude, though whose dim
 purport
 Outpriced the courtesies of the bland.

I am now the only being who
 Remembers you
 It may be. What a waste that Nature
 Grudged soul so dear the art its due!

TO THE MOON

"WHAT have you looked at, Moon,
 In your time,
 Now long past your prime?"
 "O, I have looked at, often looked at
 Sweet, sublime,
 Sore things, shudderful, night and noon
 In my time."

"What have you mused on, Moon,
 In your day,
 So aloof, so far away?"
 "O, I have mused on, often mused on
 Growth, decay,
 Nations alive, dead, mad, aswoun,
 In my day!"

"Have you much wondered, Moon,
 On your rounds,
 Self-wrapt, beyond Earth's bounds?"
 "Yea, I have wondered, often wondered
 At the sounds
 Reaching me of the human tune
 On my rounds."

"What do you think of it, Moon,
 As you go?
 Is Life much or no?"
 "O, I think of it, often think of it
 As a show
 God ought surely to shut up soon,
 As I go."

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

THIS statue of Liberty, busy man,
 Here erect in the city square,
 I have watched while your scrubbings, this
 early morning,
 Strangely wistful,
 And half tristful,
 Have turned her from foul to fair;

With your bucket of water, and mop, and
 brush,
 Bringing her out of the grime
 That has smeared her during the smokes of
 winter
 With such glumness
 In her dumbness,
 And aged her before her time.

You have washed her down with motherly
 care—
 Head, shoulders, arm, and foot,
 To the very hem of the robes that drape her—
 All expertly
 And alertly,
 Till a long stream, black with soot,

Flows over the pavement to the road,
 And her shape looms pure as snow:
 I read you are hired by the City guardians—
 May be yearly,
 Or once merely—
 To treat the statues so?

"Oh, I'm not hired by the Councilmen
 To cleanse the statues here.
 I do this one as a self-willed duty,
 Not as paid to,
 Or at all made to,
 But because the doing is dear."

Ah, then I hail you brother and friend!
 Liberty's knight divine.
 What you have done would have been my
 doing,
 Yea, most verily,
 Well, and thoroughly,
 Had but your courage been mine!

"Oh I care not for Liberty's mold,
 Liberty charms not me;
 What's Freedom but an idler's vision,
 Vain, pernicious,
 Often vicious,
 Of things that cannot be!

"Memory it is that brings me to this—
 Of a daughter—my one sweet own.
 She grew a famous carver's model,
 One of the fairest
 And of the rarest:—
 She sat for the figure as shown.

"But alas, she died in this distant place
 Before I was warned to betake
 Myself to her side! . . . And in love
 of my darling,
 In love of the fame of her,
 And the good name of her,
 I do this for her sake."

Answer I gave not. Of that form
 The carver was I at his side;
 His child, my model, held so saintly,
 Grand in feature,
 Gross in nature,
 In the dens of vice had died.

LIFE LAUGHS ONWARD

RAMBLING I looked for an old abode
 Where, years back, one had lived I knew;
 Its site a dwelling duly showed,
 But it was new.

I went where, not so long ago,
 The sod had riven two breasts asunder;
 Daisies throve gayly there, as though
 No grave were under.

I walked along a terrace where
 Loud children gamboled in the sun;
 The figure that had once sat there
 Was missed by none.

Life laughed and moved on unsubdued;
 I saw that Old succumbed to Young:
 'Twas well. My too regretful mood
 Died on my tongue.

• INDEX OF AUTHORS, TITLES, AND FIRST LINES OF POEMS

INDEX OF AUTHORS, TITLES, AND FIRST LINES OF POEMS

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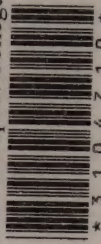
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Boston Baptist College



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